

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR 1917

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The Light of the World. Holman Hunt.....	<i>Facing 140</i>

The artist himself has thus described this picture: "The closed door is the obstinately shut mind; the weeds and cumber of daily neglect are the accumulated hindrances of sloth; the orchard is the garden of delectable fruit for the dainty feast of the soul; the music of the still small voice is the summons to the sluggard to awaken and become a zealous laborer under the Divine Master; the bat flitting about only in darkness is a natural type of ignorance; the kingly and priestly dress of Christ is the sign of his reign over the body and the soul to them who would give their allegiance to him and acknowledge God's overrule. In making it a night scene, lighted mainly by the lantern carried by Christ, I followed metaphorical explanation in the Psalms, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path," with also the accordant allusion by Paul to the sleeping soul, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

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"Never had such a vision of the Face come to mortal before. Never has it been approached in beauty of power by any painter since."

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LESSONS FOR 1917

JANUARY—JUNE

New Testament

The Gospel of John

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SELECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON COMMITTEE—
AMERICAN SECTION

FIRST QUARTER

- I. M. John 1.1-9. JESUS THE LIFE AND LIGHT OF MEN.
T. John 1.10-18. THE WORD MADE FLESH.
W. Hebrews 1.1-9. REVELATION THROUGH THE SON.
T. 2 Timothy 1.3-14. GOSPEL OF LIFE.
F. Mark 10.17-22. REFUSING LIFE.
S. Luke 7.11-17. POWER OVER DEATH.
S. Philippians 2.1-11. THE MIND OF CHRIST.
- II. M. John 1.19-28. JOHN'S DISCLAIMER.
T. John 1.29-34. JOHN'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING JESUS.
W. Matthew 17.1-13. ELIJAH AND JOHN.
T. Luke 3.1-6. THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS.
F. Luke 3.7-14. FRUITS OF REPENTANCE.
S. Luke 3.15-17; 21-22. THE GREAT-ER BAPTISM.
S. Matthew 11.7-15. JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING JOHN.
- III. M. John 1.35-42. FIRST DISCIPLES OF THE LORD JESUS.
T. John 1.43-51. PERSONAL WORK.
W. Luke 5.1-11. CALLING OF FISHERMAN.
T. Luke 5.27-32. CALLING OF LEVI.
F. Acts 9.1-8. CALLING OF SAUL.
S. Ephesians 4.1-16. FIDELITY TO CALLING.
S. Matthews 19.23-30. REWARD OF DISCIPLESHIP.
- IV. M. John 2.1-12. MARRIAGE IN CANA.
T. John 2.13-22. REVERENCE FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD.
W. Luke 2.22-38. DEDICATED IN THE TEMPLE.
T. Luke 2.41-52. THE BOY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.
F. 1 Samuel 3.1-14. VISION IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.
S. Psalm 122. JOY OF CHURCH-GOING.
S. Matthew 21.12-17. A HOUSE OF PRAYER.
- V. M. John 3.1-8. JESUS AND NICODEMUS.
T. John 3.9-21. JESUS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.
W. John 3.22-36. JOHN'S FINAL TESTIMONY.
T. Luke 18.9-14. EFFECTIVE PRAYER.
F. Luke 19.1-10. SEEKING TO SAVE.
S. Romans 1.8-17. GOSPEL OF SALVATION.
S. 1 Timothy 1.12-17. THE ONLY SAVIOR.
- VI. M. John 4.1-14. JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.
T. John 4.19-26. TRUE WORSHIP.
W. John 4.27-38. ONE SOWETH, ANOTHER REAPETH.
T. John 4.39-42. FAITH OF THE SAMARITANS.

- F. Acts 8.4-13. GOSPEL IN SAMARIA.
S. Acts 10.34-43. NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.
S. Romans 10.11-21. SALVATION FOR ALL.
- VII. M. John 4.43-54. JESUS HEALS A NOBLEMAN'S SON.
T. Mark 1.29-39. JESUS THE HEALER.
W. Mark 2.1-12. HEALER OF BODY AND SOUL.
T. Matt. 15.21-28. FAITH AND HEALING.
F. Acts 19.8-20. HEALING POWER.
S. Matt. 25.31-40. SPIRIT OF HELPFULNESS.
S. 1 John 1.1-10. PERFECT CLEANSING.
- VIII. M. John 5.1-9. JESUS AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.
T. John 5.10-18. LORD OF THE SABBATH.
W. John 5.19-20. AUTHORITY OF THE SON.
T. John 5.30-47. JESUS' DEFENSE.
F. Mark 5.25-34. POWER OVER DISEASE.
S. Mark 5.21-24, 35-43. POWER OVER DEATH.
S. Luke 5.17-26. POWER OVER DISEASE AND SIN.
- IX. M. John 6.1-14. JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND.
T. John 6.15-21. INFLUENCE OF JESUS' PRESENCE.
W. Mark 6.30-44. FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND.
T. Matthew 15.32-39. FEEDING OF FOUR THOUSAND.
F. 1 Kings 17.8-18. WIDOW'S MEAL AND OIL.
S. Psalm 34.1-10. JEHOVAH, THE PROVIDER.
S. Psalm 34.11-22. JEHOVAH, THE DELIVERER.
- X. M. John 6.22-31. DESIRE FOR SIGNS.
T. John 6.32-40. JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE.
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T. John 6.52-59. THE GIVER OF LIFE.
F. John 6.60-71. WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.
S. John 7.1-13. OPINIONS DIVIDED.
S. John 7.14-24. RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT.
- XI. M. John 7.25-36. CAME FROM GOD.
T. John 7.37-52. SPEAKING WITH AUTHORITY.
W. John 8.12-20. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.
T. John 8.21-30. JESUS SAVES FROM SIN.
F. John 8.31-40. CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM.
S. John 8.41-50. TEST OF SONSHIP.
S. John 8.51-59. ETERNAL SONSHIP.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

XII. M. John 1.1-14. JESUS THE LIFE AND LIGHT OF MEN.

- John 1.19, 23-34. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS.
 T. John 1.35-49. FIRST DISCIPLES OF THE LORD JESUS.
 John 2.13-22. REVERENCE OF JESUS FOR HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.
 W. John 3.5-17. JESUS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.
 John 4.5-14, 24-26. JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.
 T. John 4.43-54. JESUS HEALS A NOBLEMAN'S SON.
 John 5.1-15. JESUS AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.
 F. John 6.1-14. JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND.
 John 6.24-37. JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE.
 S. John 8.12, 31-37, 56-58. JESUS SAVES FROM SIN.
 S. John 14.1-14. JESUS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.

SECOND QUARTER

- I. M. John 9.1-12. JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND.
 T. John 9.13-25. COURAGEOUS CONFESSION.
 W. John 9.26-41. BEFRIENDING THE OUTCAST.
 T. Mark 10.46-52. BLIND BARTIMEUS.
 F. Mark 8.22-26. A BLIND MAN HEALED.
 S. 1 John 2.1-11. WALKING IN THE LIGHT.
 S. 1 John 2.12-17. WORLDLINESS CONDEMNED.
 II. M. John 11.1-16. DEATH OF LAZARUS.
 T. John 11.17-27. THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.
 W. John 11.28-37. SORROW OF JESUS.
 T. John 11.38-46. JESUS RAISES LAZARUS.
 F. John 11.47-57. PLOT TO KILL JESUS.
 S. Matthew 28.1-10. THE RISEN CHRIST.
 S. 1 Cor. 15.50-58. RESURRECTION TRIUMPH.
 III. M. John 10.1-10. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.
 T. John 10.11-18. JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD.
 W. John 10.19-30. DARKNESS OF UNBELIEF.
 T. John 10.31-42. EVIDENCE OF WORKS.
 F. Zech. 11.15-17, 13.7-9. THE FOOLISH SHEPHERD.
 S. Matthew 18.7-14. LOST SHEEP.
 S. Luke 15.1-10. JOY OF FINDING.
 IV. M. John 12.1-11. JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY.
 T. Luke 10.38-42. FRIENDS OF JESUS.
 W. Mark 14.1-11. SERVICE OF LOVE.
 T. Matthew 26.6-13. PRECIOUS OINTMENT.
 F. Luke 7.36-50. EXAMPLE OF LOVE.
 S. Isaiah 61.1-3. DIVINE ANOINTING.
 S. Mark 12.28-34. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.
 V. M. John 12.12-19. JESUS WELCOMED AS KING.
 T. John 12.20-33. THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.
 W. John 12.34-43. SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

- T. John 12.44-50. JESUS AND THE FATHER.
 F. Mark 11.1-11. TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.
 S. Matt. 21.1-11. HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST.
 S. Luke 19.29-40. COMING OF THE KING.

VI. M. John 13.1-11. JESUS THE SERVANT OF ALL.

- T. John 13.12-20. TRUE GREATNESS.
 W. John 13.21-30. THE BETRAYER REVEALED.
 T. John 13.31-38. PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD.
 F. Mark 10.32-45. GREATNESS THROUGH SERVICE.
 S. Luke 14.7-11. LESSON IN HUMILITY.
 S. 1 Peter 5.1-11. HUMILITY AND SERVICE.

VII. M. John 15.1-11. JESUS THE TRUE VINE.

- T. John 15.12-25. FRIENDS, NOT SERVANTS.
 W. 1 John 2.13-29. ABIDING IN CHRIST.
 T. 1 John 3.1-12. MARKS OF GOD'S CHILDREN.
 F. 1 John 3.13-24. TEST OF LOVE.
 S. 1 John 4.1-11. SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND LOVE.
 S. 1 John 4.12-21. SUPREMACY OF LOVE.

VIII. M. Isaiah 28.1-13. IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONTROL.

- T. Luke 12.35-48. WATCHFULNESS.
 W. Romans 14.13-23. GIVING NO OFFENSE.
 T. 1 Corinthians 3.10-17. CHARACTER BUILDING.
 F. 1 Corinthians 8. SELF DENIAL.
 S. Prov. 1.7-19. GUARDING AGAINST TEMPTATION.
 S. Romans 13.8-14. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT.

IX. M. John 14.15-30. THE COMFORTER PROMISED.

- T. John 15.26-16.11. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK.
 W. John 16.12-24. JESUS GOING AWAY.
 T. John 16.25-33. COMFORTING THE DISCIPLES.
 F. John 17.1-13. PRAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES.
 S. John 17.14-26. ONE WITH THE FATHER.
 S. Acts 2.1-18. THE SPIRIT GIVEN.

X. M. John 18.1-11. JESUS BETRAYED.

- T. John 18.12-18, 25-27. JESUS DENIED.
 W. John 18.19-24, 28-32. JESUS TRIED.
 T. John 18.33-40. JESUS AND PILATE.
 F. John 19.1-16. JESUS CONDEMNED.
 S. Luke 23.13-25. A VACILLATING JUDGE.
 S. Isaiah 53.1-9. DESPISED AND REJECTED.

XI. M. John 19.17-30. JESUS CRUCIFIED.

- T. John 19.31-42. JESUS BURIED.
 W. Matthew 27.27-44. KING OF THE JEWS.
 T. Matthew 27.45-56. DEATH AGONY.
 F. Luke 23.26-43. CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS.
 S. Luke 23.44-56. TRIUMPHANT DEATH.
 S. Matthew 27.57-66. THE SEALED TOMB.

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- XII. M. John 20.1-9. THE RISEN LORD.
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 W. John 20.19-31. THOMAS CONVINCED.
 T. John 21.1-14. DISCIPLES SURPRISED.
 F. 1 Corinthians 15.1-11. RESURRECTION GOSPEL.
 S. 1 Corinthians 15.12-28. RESURRECTION HOPE.
 S. 1 Corinthians 15.35-49. RESURRECTION GLORY.

- XIII. M. John 9.1-11, 35-38. JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND.
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 T. Isaiah 1.2-9. A COURAGEOUS PREACHER.
 W. Isaiah 1.10-20. TRUE RELIGION.
 T. Isaiah 5.1-10. A BOLD REFORMER.
 F. Isaiah 9.8-10.4. SIN AND PUNISHMENT.
 S. Isaiah 7.1-14. A CLEAR-VISIONED STATESMAN.
 S. Isaiah 11.1-9. TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

- II. M. 2 Chronicles 28.1-15. AHAZ, THE FAITHLESS KING.
 T. 2 Chronicles 28.16-27. IDOLATRY OF AHAZ.
 W. 2 Kings 16.1-9. A FOOLISH POLICY.
 T. 2 Kings 16.10-20. RELIGIOUS INSTABILITY.
 F. Isaiah 22.15-25. FAITHLESSNESS CONDEMNED.
 S. 1 Kings 21.1-10. A MURDEROUS QUEEN.
 S. 1 Kings 21.11-24. ROYAL WICKEDNESS DENOUNCED.

- III. M. 2 Chronicles 30.1-9. HEZEKIAH, THE FAITHFUL KING.
 T. 2 Chronicles 30.10-19. A RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLY.
 W. 2 Chronicles 30.20-27. A RELIGIOUS AWAKENING.
 T. 2 Kings 18.1-8. A RELIGIOUS REFORM.
 F. Romans 13.1-7. GOD-APPOINTED RULERS.
 S. Psalm 72. A RIGHTEOUS KING.
 S. Isaiah 9.1-7. THE IDEAL KING.

- IV. M. 2 Kings 18.13-25. SENNACHERIB'S INVASION OF JUDAH.
 T. 2 Kings 18.26-37. DEFYING JEHOVAH.

- W. 2 Kings 19.1-7. DIVINE HELP PROMISED.
 T. 2 Kings 19.8-19. PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE.
 F. 2 Kings 19.20-28. THE PRAYER ANSWERED.
 S. 2 Kings 19.29-37. DELIVERANCE.
 S. Psalm 46. THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

- V. M. Isaiah 55. GOD'S GRACIOUS INVITATION.
 T. 1 Corinthians 1.18-2.5. CALLED TO SALVATION.
 W. 1 Corinthians 1.1-9. CALLED TO FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS.
 T. 1 Corinthians 1.10-17. CALLED TO PREACH.
 F. 2 Tim. 1.3-14. CALLED TO SERVICE.
 S. Luke 14.15-24. THE INVITATION SLIGHTED.
 S. Hebrews 3.1-15. OBEDIENCE TO CALL.

- VI. M. 2 Chronicles 33.1-9. MANASSEH'S SIN.
 T. 2 Chronicles 33.10-20. MANASSEH'S REPENTANCE.
 W. Ezekiel 18.21-32. PENITENCE TO BE REWARDED.
 T. Psalm 32. PEACE OF FORGIVENESS.
 F. Hosea 6.1-10. SHAM REPENTANCE.
 S. Hosea 14.1-8. PENITENCE AND PARDON.
 S. Psalm 51. CRY FOR PARDON.

- VII. M. 2 Chronicles 34.1-13. JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN.
 T. Deuteronomy 17.14-20. INSTRUCTION FOR KINGS.
 W. 1 Samuel 9.17-10.1. THE FIRST KING.
 T. 1 Samuel 8.10-22. WORDS OF WARNING.
 F. 2 Chronicles 15.1-15. ASA'S GOOD REIGN.
 S. 2 Kings 11.1-12. A BOY KING.
 S. Psalm 2. THE INVISIBLE KING.

- VIII. M. 2 Chronicles 34.14-21. FINDING THE BOOK OF THE LAW.
 T. 2 Kings 22.14-20. THE LAW CONFIRMED.
 W. 2 Kings 23.1-14. THE COVENANT ESTABLISHED.
 T. 2 Kings 23.15-25. THE LAW ENFORCED.
 F. Deuteronomy 6.1-9. LOVE TOWARD GOD.
 S. Matthew 22.34-40. THE HIGHEST LAW.
 S. Matthew 7.21-27. HEARING AND DOING.

- IX. M. Jeremiah 9.7-16. CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH FORETOLD.
 T. 2 Kings 23.36-24.9. INCOMPETENT RULERS.
 W. 2 Kings 24.10-20. CAPTIVITY BEGUN.
 T. 2 Kings 25.1-12. JERUSALEM LAID WASTE.
 F. 2 Kings 25.13-21. END OF JUDAH.
 S. 2 Kings 17.1-8. END OF ISRAEL.
 S. 2 Kings 17.9-23. SIN THE CAUSE OF DISASTER.

- X. M. Ezekiel 34.1-10. FAITHLESS SHEPHERDS.
 T. Ezekiel 34.11-19. THE SHEPHERD OF CAPTIVE ISRAEL.
 W. Ezekiel 34.20-31. JEHOVAH'S SHEPHERDING CARE.
 T. Ezekiel 33.1-9. JEHOVAH'S REPRESENTATIVE.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- F. Ezekiel 33.10-20. THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE.
S. Ezekiel 37.1-14. DRY BONES REVIVED.
S. Ezekiel 37.15-27. RESTORED AND EXALTED.
- XI. M. Daniel 1.1-9. A BRAVE YOUTH.
T. Daniel 1.10-20. BENEFITS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE.
W. 2 Corinthians 6.11-18. SEPARATION ENJOINED.
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TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1917



INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Three Essentials for Success in Teaching. To my fellow-laborers in the Sunday-school work, greeting. May 1917 find us all with a great vision of the importance of our work, glowing enthusiasm for the privilege of our work, and genuine consecration for the accomplishment of our work.

When asked what is your part in church work, have you ever answered in a deprecatory sort of way, "Oh, I am only a Sunday-school teacher"? Do not so answer. More regrettable still is the attitude of some teachers who regard theirs as a task supposed to be necessary which they may as well assume as anyone else, or of those other teachers who accept their position cheerfully but with no appreciation whatsoever of its responsibility, accepting it as they do an invitation to spend an afternoon with a friend—if the weather is favorable and nothing more interesting for that date comes up, they will be there at the appointed time.

It is impossible to overestimate the *importance* of our work. There is no Christian service which is more worth while, none which brings greater happiness to the doer, than Bible teaching. Let us gain a clear vision of the greatness of our high calling and of the vastness of its issues, for ours is the matchless privilege of setting the trend of souls toward God and the service of hands toward others.)

"It is a great challenge to one," writes Miss Slattery, "to take half an hour now and then and think definitely of the important matters which hinge and turn upon the teacher as upon a pivot. That half hour clarifies my vision and brushes away the clouds of petty detail that often hide the sun—children's ideas about God, boys' attitude toward sin, girls' thoughts about duty and service, young people's ideas of lives of self-sacrifice and loyalty to great ideals, turn every Sunday upon the life and work of teachers, as upon pivots. When all has been said and done in the great work of improving equipment, and the splendid task of increasing efficiency, the teacher remains the pivotal point. This is a great challenge, a clear call. It should send every teacher to whatever sources can be found to increase his knowledge of people and facts; it should send every teacher to the great Book with a deepening hunger to realize in life its purposes and plans; it should send us all into the presence of our God sincerely, often, and with longing to learn of him that we may teach. The pivot—the point upon which something of importance hinges and turns. We ordinary teachers in the schools large or small are that. Upon what we know and are, live and teach, hinges what the children and youth who look into our faces will be. May God grant us a vision of the significance and privilege of it."

We need enthusiasm for our work. Some one has changed the old proverb so as to read that "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing with enthusiasm." Bible teaching should be viewed, not as an obligation or a duty or a burden, but as a glorious privilege.

There is nothing spectacular about Bible teaching, it makes no stir in the world, often it is not rightly appraised by others, no medals are given it in reward. It does demand sacrifice of time and strength and energy, it does tend to become monotonous, and there do come times when it seems unprofitable. Let us recognize all this, let us not minimize the demands which our high calling makes upon us, but then let us think of its privilege and face the work and discouragements with all the enthusiasm we can muster. Would the work be half as fascinating if it were twice as easy? Joy in attainment is proportionate to the difficulties surmounted on the way.

If you do not realize the privilege, force yourself during this year to realize it: if you do not habitually feel enthusiastic about it, determine to become so, act as though you were, sit down to the preparation of your lesson with a happy smile and a cheerful heart, go to your class in the same manner and mood, and before you realize it you will have become genuinely aglow with enthusiasm and love for your work, and your enthusiasm for your subject will enkindle in your pupils' minds a like enthusiasm, for enthusiasm is contagious.

We need consecration in order to accomplish our work, for while religious truths may be taught, the religious spirit is rather caught, and therefore we must bring to our work consecrated personality. We must put our own lives under the leadership of the Great Teacher, and then we may ask our pupils to follow with us where he leads.

Sir George, one time President of the Sunday-school Union of England, put consecration as the first element of success in Sunday-school work. "Rooted in the profound conception of the value of the soul, the matchless opportunities for impressing young life of the suitability of the message to be delivered, and fostered by earnest prayer, it stands out in my experience as the one thing needful," he says. "So fed, it will burn up as stubble the trifles which so often mar your work. It will send you early to school with a lesson well prepared; it will give a message to what might otherwise be a stammering tongue; it will fill your heart with the milk of human kindness, on the top of which rises the cream of Christian love; it will make a duty, otherwise irksome, one of satisfaction and delight. Will you, at this time more than ever, say, 'This one thing I do'? Such a resolution will send you to the more careful study of the Book, and above all, to the Mercy Seat, with petitions for each scholar of the class, as well as for grace to lead them to Christ."

Our 1917 Course. Our year begins with six months in the wonderful Gospel of John. Eight years have intervened since this Gospel was studied in our Uniform Course, and it is two years since we studied the Synoptic Gospels. Surely it is with the greatest satisfaction that we turn to the beautiful words of John's Prologue, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and follow the account of Christ's words and works as given by the disciple whom he loved.

Dr. John R. Mott once asked Professor Drummond to name three courses of study which might be recommended to Christians for spiritual profit. After a few moments of thought he replied: "I would recommend that they study, first, the Life of Jesus Christ; secondly, the Life of Jesus Christ; and thirdly, the Life of Jesus Christ." Was he not right? Can the spiritual life thrive without the continual study of the life of Christ, and can it thrive as well upon any other account as upon that of "The Spiritual Gospel"? The spirituality, the penetration, the power of this marvelous Gospel will grow upon you with every fresh perusal of it.

Portions of this Gospel are profoundly and mystically expressed, but we have only a very few lessons which are beyond the comprehension of young pupils, and each of these has its beautiful lesson truth for them. The Prologue, our first lesson, looks very difficult for Primary or Junior Grade pupils, but its truth for them a teacher taught in such simple language as this question shows, "What kin is God to you, and what kin are you to God?" "More than one mother told him afterwards that her child came home all aglow to tell her the fact now for the first time really made his own, 'I am God's child.' That word 'kin' had unlocked the doors of heaven for him."

Every pupil, young or old, should have a copy of the Gospel of John and bring it to class during our study. Copies can be bought from the Bible Society for two to ten cents each.

The last six months of the year are given to Old Testament study. Beginning

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

with the books of Isaiah and Second Kings we follow the fortunes of the Kingdom of Judah until its overthrow, concluding with the return of the exiles and the rebuilding of the Temple and re-establishment of the nation as told in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Additional lessons are taken from the Psalms, Daniel, and Ezekiel.

"When God wanted to give the world the truth of Christ," wrote Phillips Brooks, "he took that Hebrew nation which had some truth, truth of the right sort though it was very meager and insufficient, and mixed up with other things which were not true; he took that truth and brought Christianity out of that." After six months spent upon the study of the life of Christ we turn to the study of the life of the Hebrew nation out of which God brought Christianity.

At first we feel the sudden change from the noonday light of John to the twilight of Chronicles. We read about the burning of incense on the high places, about the Baalim and the Asherim, about molten images and the burning of children in the fire, and it all seems very remote, wholly unconnected with the life of today. Yet we need only to study these Old Testament books in an appreciative spirit, and we find them freighted with helpful lessons for ourselves. We see what evils resulted from the mistakes and sins which nations and individuals committed, and what penalties the doers were forced to pay. There is inspiration as well as warning in them, for we see the good things which were done, and how wide a range of gifts are useful in a life of service for God—ruggedness of character, unflinching perseverance in the following of an ideal, zealous devotion to God. And through it all we see the Divine mercy, and gain a deep impression of the love and the tenderness and the care as well as the justice of God. Such lessons bring the thought of God into our daily lives.

The main lesson of the New Testament is redemption; the main lesson of the Old Testament is reform: both are needed today.

* **The Three Great Aims of a Teacher.** A teacher expects to accomplish something. That is why he is a teacher. He expects to accomplish many things, but chief among his aims are these three; to impart knowledge of the Bible, to develop the spiritual life of his pupils, and to lead his pupils into paths of service. A soldier-lad in this great war, referring to the opportunities he had had and missed of accepting the Gospel message, said, "I am sorry to say I did not take it seriously." That so many do not take it seriously is possibly due to the fact that so many teachers follow their aims like vagrants rather than like crusaders.

Knowledge is to be made tributary to an end. May you so teach the Gospel of John that your pupils shall not only be convinced that Jesus actually lived the life which John portrays, or be struck anew by the graciousness of his personality and the perfection of his life, but that they shall be so influenced by his life and words that they shall say; "Like that life as far as possible I want to make my own life. Jesus Christ shall be my Guide."

To know, to be, and to do: keep these three great aims for your pupils before you. Remember that emotions which leave the conscience untouched and the conduct unchanged play havoc with character. Sterne bewailing a dead animal and forgetting his duty to a living mother, Rousseau parading as the "Man of Feeling" and sending his children to foundling hospitals, are types of men with whom feeling had no effect upon action. Don't let your pupils keep their noble ideals for tomorrow's poem: they are given for today's prose. An English Sunday-school worker after referring to the work being done during the war by young women whose days formerly were filled with pleasure-seeking, declares that in the schools teachers have not challenged their faith and courage half enough, speaking to them as if life and character were a primrose path and a picnic, and that it has needed the war to bring out their noble spirit of service.

* **Certain Virtues of a Successful Teacher.** A successful teacher is *regular in attendance and early in arrival* at school. The few moments' informal talk before the service begins he can not afford to miss. Your young people value more highly than you perhaps realize the handshake and cordial greeting awaiting them each week, and the opportunity for a pleasant chat with you, brief though it may be.

The successful teacher *knows his pupils* intimately. He does not limit his acquaintance with them to the Sunday-school period. One teacher I have heard of does so much for his boys in the way of recreation that it is possible for him to say to them, "If you do not know your lessons you will have to get out of

the class and make room for others who are waiting to come in." This would be a risky procedure in most classes, but it succeeds in his class for the reason given. Practically all teachers who hold their pupils by winning their loyalty, give considerable time to them outside the class.

The successful teacher *forgets himself* in his teaching. Alice Freeman Palmer had the power of holding her audience in a remarkable way, and Professor Palmer in analyzing that power, gives no little part of the credit to her utter self-forgetfulness. He writes of "the simple language touched with a strange forgetfulness, the clinging voice modulated so that the farthest auditor listened with pleasure; while the swift sentences unfolded her theme smoothly, tactfully, often humorously; anecdote, argument, home-thrust, or thrilling passage within easy command, and all welded so solidly and with so little self-consciousness that at its close it seemed impossible to take any other view of the object than the one presented."

To punctuality the successful teacher adds self-forgetfulness and to self-forgetfulness, thorough preparation. Teaching a Bible lesson is not an easy art, and an unprepared lesson is practically certain to be a poor lesson. One can not begin his acquaintance with the lesson after he reaches the class and then succeed in teaching a worth-while lesson. Freshness, vitality, force, effectiveness will be lacking. Not even a good general knowledge of the Bible and ability in teaching will make good the lack of special preparation. In Henry James' lecture on Balzac we are told that "the fault in the artist which amounts most completely to a failure of dignity is the absence of *saturation with his idea*. When saturation fails, no other real presence avails, as when, on the other hand, it operates, no failure of method fatally interferes."

Earnestness is a mark of the successful teacher. Teaching often loses more than half its power by reason of a listless manner. "Why aren't you calling your papers, boy?" a man asked, after having had some difficulty in getting the boy's attention to the fact that he wanted one. "'Cause there ain't nuthin' in 'em to holler about," the urchin answered. You cannot impart to others an interest which you yourself do not feel. You must throw yourself into your teaching, you must feel the things you say; your words must come red-hot from your heart in order that they may warm the hearts of your hearers. It was said of Gladstone that when he was making a speech in the House of Commons it seemed as if the subject in hand was the chief interest of his life. And so it was for the time being. And your subject must for the time being be to you the most interesting thing in the world.

And do not forget that when one is interested in his theme he is *animated* and happy, that it is quite possible and decidedly desirable to be in earnest and at the same time to smile occasionally. Do not wear a forbidding aspect. Dean Hodges declares that "there is a look in the faces of some of the people who are seen in public on Sunday carrying limp-covered Bibles under their arms, which is an argument against the Christian religion." If you are a teacher of little folks, learn this stanza by Mildred Merrill:

When teacher says, "Count up to three,
And down again as well,"
It seems as if I never could,
No, never, never tell.
But when she says, "I wonder who
Can count as high as three?"
I want to try to do it quick,
Just 'cause she smiled at me.

My newspaper this week had an account of a New York educator's speech at a teachers' convention. He maintained that better-looking teachers meant better discipline and more effective teaching, and declared, "Every American boy and girl has an inalienable right to have a good-looking school teacher, and school boards should be willing to pay a higher salary for a comely instructor." A bright, cheerful teacher is a "good-looking" teacher, no matter what his features may be, and a woman teacher who takes pains not to be untidy or "dowdy" does receive a higher salary in the greater esteem of her pupils.

A successful teacher never complains of inattention. He compels attention by being *interesting*. Someone remarked to Edward Thring that a certain preacher was dry. "Dry!" exclaimed Thring, "why, my good fellow, brick-

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dust is butter compared with him." There are very few such dry teachers in these days, for teachers realize that to be dry and uninteresting is for them the unpardonable sin. There is no lesson which you can not invest with human interest and not make vivid, forceful, helpful. I like to think of that small boy who many years ago was taken to listen to one of the greatest of modern preachers, and who sat very quietly in the pew for a time, and then suddenly turned to his companion and said in clear, childish accents heard near and far, "Is Mr. Spurgeon talking to me?" What a compliment to the great preacher! You can have the undivided attention of every member of your class, and you can make each one feel as did that small boy that you are talking especially to him, not because you personally apply the truth to his own case, but because you so teach that he makes his own application.

The good teacher avoids rambling, indefinite, aimless teaching by having a *plan*. "What folly!" you would exclaim, were you to hear of a man's starting to build a structure before he had decided whether it was to be a dwelling or an office-building, of his putting an elevator into a bungalow, or, as actually was done by a builder recently, of his erecting a swimming pool without planning for the intake of water. But do you realize what folly it is for a teacher to begin teaching without having any plan in mind, throwing his material together haphazard without regard to the laws of construction, not knowing how to have a good foundation, not knowing where the apex of his thought is to appear, not knowing when his structure is complete?

There is much *variety* in a successful teacher's methods. Sometimes he begins the lesson, for example, with the place, making the scene vividly real; at another time with the historical background, connecting it with what has gone before; again without any preliminary words he begins with a bright story which arouses interest and leaves him at that part of the lesson which he wishes to take up first, be it the beginning or the very heart of the whole lesson; or again he startles his pupils with some thought-provoking questions.

Perhaps it is most often in a class of adults that one finds a deadly monotony of teaching. Even with adults one should not proceed each Sunday in exactly the way one's hearers expect. Get out of the ruts. Try new ways. Variety pleases the adult mind. Mrs. Montgomery, the well-known lecturer on missions, says: "Announce, 'The Subject of the meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society is Burma,' and you may get out the steady and reliable; but announce 'A Visit to the Land of the Lost Book,' and you will stimulate both curiosity and attention."

Certain Failings of an Unsuccessful Teacher. He is a poor teacher who *scolds* because of inattention on the part of his pupils. Rather should he find where he himself is amiss. Possibly the trouble is that he has failed to thoroughly prepare his lesson or else to prepare an interesting lesson, or that he is dull and tiresome instead of being alert and interesting in manner.

Said a college student of a professor: "He carries the ball too much himself in class. No coach ever developed a strong foot-ball team by carrying the ball himself." One of the greatest temptations that comes to a teacher is to carry the ball all the time himself. It is so much easier to *lecture* than to teach, so much easier to impart knowledge than to elicit it by wise questions, so much easier to talk than to get one's pupils to talk, that many a teacher fails to make the greater effort even though he knows it would bring a greater gain.

A poor teacher occasionally *wastes the entire lesson period*, saying to himself that as long as he keeps his pupils entertained it does not matter "for once" if he merely "passes the hour." In his effort to be interesting he is often satisfied with being *merely* interesting. He will spend the whole period talking about the latest ball game, because that has an absorbing interest for his boys, or about the coming social, because his girls' thoughts are centered upon that. He often tells an entertaining story which has no bearing whatever upon the lesson, neither illuminating nor enforcing any part of it.

For other teachers the temptation is to attempt to *impart all the knowledge* which he has gained in regard to it. It is a great mistake to think a lesson must be "covered," to hurry over the part of the lesson in which your pupils are profitably interested for the sake of omitting nothing in which you are interested. Essential facts can be rapidly summed up at the

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close or reviewed at the beginning of the next lesson. To touch upon all the truths which the lesson holds or which by a little ingenuity it can seemingly be made to hold is a similar mistake. Each lesson has one central truth, or one truth which is the best one for your pupils' consideration, and that is the only one upon which you should dwell.

A poor teacher sometimes confounds *exhorting* with teaching. The results of the two processes are as different as the processes themselves. Instead of exhorting your pupils to be generous, tell them of deeds so generous and noble that they will wish to emulate them. Abstractions are to be avoided. Such virtues as heroism, gratitude, faith, appreciation, duty, service, are learned indirectly—"caught," we sometimes say—by seeing them in action, not by hearing their praises sung.

Questioning is an art which not to have mastered is the mark of a poor teacher. Some teachers only use questions to "mark time." They forget that their order is "Forward, march." Some teachers hurl questions at their pupils after the manner of one pelting with stones, a process of which few pupils approve. Some teachers ask questions around the class in rotation, or call a pupil by name before asking a question: both methods permit the rest of the class to sit idly back and dream of something else. Some teachers ask questions so hopelessly vague that no one can answer them.

Have you ever read a report of court proceedings and noticed the kind of questions to which one of the lawyers cries sharply, "I object"? Nine times out of ten the protest is made because the opposing attorney by his wording of the question has suggested the kind of answer he wants from the witness. A good questioner does not do as a teacher what he would not be permitted to do as a lawyer. Leading questions deprive pupils of the necessity for thought and for expressing themselves, and no verbal assent is worth anything which does not express the speaker's own opinion or belief.

Interrogation, not statement, stirs a pupil's mind. And statement by the pupil fixes a thought in his mind which easily escapes when heard only on his teacher's lips. Any one can ask questions, but only one skilled in the art can ask wise questions, questions that are clear, direct, and to the point, questions that will clear up any misunderstanding of the text without reflecting upon a pupil's intelligence, that will draw out a pupil's knowledge without boring him, that will provoke discussion and bring out the points you wish impressed without consuming too much time. As a rule general questions, and without exception, vague, rambling, stupid, useless questions are to be avoided.

Questions are so important a part of teaching that the wise teacher thinks them out in advance, writes them down as he studies his lesson, and then goes over them, striking out the useless ones, rewriting others in clearer or more direct language, and arranging them in their proper order. These questions then serve another purpose; they form an outline or plan to be followed in teaching, with a word or two jotted down to indicate how to begin, what information to impart, etc. A teacher then studies his plan till he has fixed it definitely in mind, for it is in his mind that he takes it to class, not on paper.

The Use of Lesson Helps. A good teacher begins his preparation of the lesson early in the week, so that he may have it well in mind and may gather illustrations or comment or suggestions from the newspaper or magazine or books he is reading, from his observations, and from his talks with others.

If you think about your lesson during the week you will be amazed at the way it will grow. A famous artist was walking along a country road with a friend when he exclaimed, "I must hasten home and deepen the color of the face I am painting." He had seen the sunburnt face of a peasant boy, and it had its lesson for him; the friend had looked at the boy and no suggestion of anything had come to him, for he did not have color or faces in mind. As you walk along the street or ride in a trolley-car, let your mind be on the alert for an illustration that will enforce your thought and interest your class because it is a live, up-to-date, personal one.

Make diligent use of this *Guide* only after you have studied the intervening chapters and the entire lesson text in your Bible, have seen clearly the connection of the two lessons and the general import of the new lesson, and have decided upon the central truth which it holds for your class.

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Then turn to this book and let it inspire your own thoughts. Have you ever seen an old-fashioned well pump which had been left so long unused that it refused to work? A little water is poured down and then when the handle is vigorously worked the refreshing well water pours readily out. There are times when one's mind is like that pump. When it refuses to work, the pouring into it of others' thoughts will cause its own thoughts to flow freely.

Reading this *Guide* should stimulate your thinking, and if you are tempted to lay it down and let your mind wander off on its own lines, then the book will have served its best purpose. Then the thoughts which it arouses will go into the melting pot together with its explanations and information, its methods and illustrations and suggestions that befit your need, and with the resultant product you should be well prepared to teach your class.

"I never have time to teach all that you give under one lesson," regretfully said a teacher to me once. She little realized how poor a book this would be if it contained only what was adapted to her age of pupils, and how meager it would be if it could all be taught in one lesson period.

The Use of Pictures. The value of pictures in teaching young pupils has long been conceded above price, but their practical value for intermediates, seniors, and even adults is not so generally recognized. Yet pictures often suggest ideas more telling than can words. Take the plan which landscape gardeners use to convey an idea of how grounds will look. Even the eminent sculptor St. Gaudens told a landscape gardener that he could not visualize a garden from a plan together with the gardener's description. The scallops for beds and the circles for trees remained scallops and circles. St. Gaudens laid out his paths with laths and tennis court tape, stuck in bushes where he wanted to plant shrubs, and shifted these till the whole pleased his eye. This led the landscape gardener to have blocks made on which are pictured grass, shrubs, trees, paths, and these when rightly assembled make a picture of a country estate which the owner can grasp.

The adult mind has not outgrown its love for the facts or the truths of life as expressed in pictorial form. Words may carry a powerful conviction, but the picture reaches and stirs the imagination, and the two combined have a power that is irresistible. For the revitalizing of oriental conceptions and conditions there is no other agency so impressive as pictures of Eastern scenes and customs, and for the visualization of beautiful ideals, none so powerful as the pictures of great artists who have thrown their religion into their art.

Take our lesson about the conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria. The mental image created in the adult mind by a description of the well and of oriental water-carriers is greatly aided by photographs of Jacob's well as it is today and of women of Palestine carrying their water jars on their heads, while reproductions of the scene as great artists have conceived it arouse in one's mind a desire to grasp for one's self the deep meaning of Jesus' words to the woman.

Good reproductions of religious paintings are constantly being published in the denominational papers and in many magazines; if you will save them and file them away according to subject you will soon have a valuable collection for your class use.

Helping Pupils to Study. Can your pupils, even though they are adults, turn quickly in their Bibles to any book, or do they first mentally begin with Genesis or with Matthew and run down the sing-song list till they come to the book sought? It is a good plan to accustom Primary and Junior Grade pupils to the use of the Bible by giving them each week a sheet of paper on which is written or mimeographed a Bible reference for each day in the week bearing upon the lesson for the following Sunday, and having them look up the references in their Bibles and write them in the spaces left for the purpose.

Do your pupils know why some Bibles are called the Authorized Version, others the American Revised Version, and yet others the English Revised Version? Do they know the abbreviations in common use for the several versions? Do they know the advantages of the Revised Version? A young woman, the daughter of a college president and herself a college student, told me today that she had a bright idea; she thought it would be so much

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better if there were Bibles printed in paragraphs, like a modern book, instead of being cut up into verses! She had never seen a Revised Version of the Bible. There are others like her.

Do your pupils know why some words in the Bible are printed in italics? Do they know how to write Bible references? Do they know in what books of the Bible to look for the account of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, all the great Bible characters? Do they know how to use a reference Bible? Do they know what the marginal references in the Bibles are for?

Do your pupils know how to use books and how to study their lessons? It is astonishing how few really do know, whether of primary or senior age. Don't ask them to "study the lesson," but give them specific work to do. Ask them to draw a map and locate the place of the next lesson, to find out what they can from books about the place, to read the Bible text that comes between one lesson and the next and be able to tell what happened or was said. Copy or cut from this *Guide* information which you wish your pupils to know and give it to pupils the week before the lesson is taught. Assign the questions to look up or to think about which are suitable for them, but do not make the mistake of giving too many questions to each one. It is a good plan to have each scholar provided with two blank books small enough for the boy's pocket or for the girl to carry with her Bible. At the close of the lesson give out one set of books in which you have written on the left-hand page the questions to be answered on the opposite page. These books will be brought to school the week following for you to take home and look over, and you will have questions upon the following lesson written in the second set of books for them to take home. A few written words of direction or commendation slipped into the books occasionally will be helpful.

Let Primary pupils keep a scrap-book in which during the first two quarters they paste pictures illustrating the life of Christ. Try to have the work neatly done, so that they may send the books to the missionary whom your school supports, or to one whose name and address you can secure through the Superintendent of "The Surplus Material Department" of "The World's Sunday-School Association." See page 23.

Let Junior and Intermediate pupils write the lesson each week in a note book entitled "A Life of Jesus by His Most Intimate Friend," and let Senior pupils write a book about "The Gospel of John."

Directing Pupils in Lines of Service. The weak point in the work of the majority of teachers is failure to lead pupils into active Christian service. Teaching alone—much less arguments—will not accomplish this. It is not sufficient to point out the need and the duty of Christian service; to allot the specific task and to direct it so that it is effective are essential. General remarks about "doing something" have little value. Pupils listen passively or even eagerly, but there the matter ends. The great mass of human beings, whether children or adults, lack initiative, and must be led into the practice of the Christian life of service through definite tasks definitely assigned. Children should early be trained to serve through right motives.

The teacher knows, of course, the abilities and the circumstances of his pupils, and therefore can wisely direct their Christian activities. Always choose something that is worth doing. When Anna Howard Shaw was only four years old she saw the convicts at Spike Island carrying pails of water from one side of the island to empty them into the sea on the other side: they were made to do this because they must be occupied with hard labor. "Even then I must have felt some dim sense of the irony of it," she writes, "for I have remembered it vividly all these years." Your pupils will be quick to resent work that is merely "busy work."

Always choose something that is within the power of your pupils to carry out. It has been suggested that every one has something—a bicycle, printing-press, kodak, hammer, pencil, needle—and if a class will make out a list of such personal possessions and then a companion list of things to be done with them to help the Sunday-school or church in some way, the fertility of suggestion displayed and the eager rivalry in the game of usefulness will be surprising. Best of all work for younger

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classes is that which will engage every one in the class, for a particular part of which each one feels himself responsible.

The specific task should not be beyond the pupils' power, but it should be commensurate with his powers and opportunities. A writer in "The East and the West" recalls the story of a young woman who at the close of her college course went home eager to undertake Christian work. She asked her pastor for something to do, and he directed her to arrange the flowers on the altar each Sunday. This was not work which could fill the heart and hands of the college graduate, and the result was that the Church lost her services, for she soon gave all her time to a social service organization. Beware of asking too little of your pupils.

The World's Sunday School Association embraces a world-wide Sunday-school field. One very active and useful branch of this Association is known as The Surplus Material Department. Through this Department teachers can learn where gifts are needed such as his class can send. Among the articles especially desired are picture-rolls, maps of Bible lands, pictures of Bible themes, attractive post-cards pasted together two and two so that the address faces are hidden, small scrap-books made of beautiful pictures cut from magazines, calendars for the new year, illustrated Sunday-school papers, Children's Day, Easter and Christmas exercises, hymn-books, lesson helps. And then there are the larger things such as organs, stereopticons and slides, talking machines and records which have outlived their usefulness here. A missionary in the Philippines writes that the illustrated picture papers are treasured for years. He found that his class of boys remembered the contents of papers even five years old. "We don't have any other papers at home," explained one of the boys, "and we read the papers going home, and when we get home father says, 'You have a new paper: read it for me,' and I read it to him. And by and by mother asks what I got from Sunday-school, and I read it to her. The next week visitors come and they ask one after another, 'What is new?' and father calls me to show them my reading, and I read for them all. If I have read each of those papers once I have read it thirty times."

The Rev. Samuel D. Price is the Superintendent of this Surplus Material Department, and his address is 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City. Write to him stating your denomination (whether "North" or "South" if it has the two divisions) and enclosing a stamp for reply, and he will send you leaflets about the work and also the name of a missionary who will be glad to receive the gifts of your class. Do not send any gifts to the office in New York, but obtain an introduction to the missionary and forward directly to him.

Why should not every class in our land prepare a Christmas box for the mission field? Dressed dolls will be eagerly received, but they should not be dressed in white, since white is generally the sign of mourning in Eastern lands. "A suitable size is about ten inches; 'Go-to-sleep' eyes add much to their value. Other things which could be included are small toys, games which do not require much knowledge of English, ribbons, pencils, paints, knives, and marbles."

A valuable list of social services possible for Sunday School scholars is given in the "Social Service Review" for October, 1915. The most complete book on the subject is "Graded Social Service for the Sunday School," by W. Norman Hutchins.¹ Adult class teachers should consult the weekly "Survey," and books such as "The Social Service Year Book," Peabody's "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," Rauschenbusch's "Christianity and the Social Crisis," Atkinson's "The Church and the People's Play," Ward's "The Social Creed of the Churches," Tippy's "The Church a Community Force," Elliot's "The Problem of Lay Leadership," Cope's "The Efficient Layman."

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

The Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. The New Testament begins with four records known as the Gospels. The word *gospel* is derived from two Anglo-Saxon words, *god*, good, and *spell*, story or tidings: *god-spell*, gospel, good tidings. The good news concerning Jesus the Son of God is told by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The first three Gospels as distinguished from the fourth Gospel are known as the Synoptic Gospels, literally, *the Gospels that may be viewed together*. These Gospels record so many of the same incidents and teachings that they may be viewed together, while the Gospel according to John has so little in common with them that it must be viewed by itself.

The portrayals of the life of Christ by the Synoptists and by John have been aptly compared to the portrayals of the life of Socrates by Xenophon and by Plato. There is little inner resemblance between the two views of Socrates, only in externals can the likeness be traced: Xenophon in his "Memorabilia" shows Socrates as a striking personality, but Plato in his "Dialogues" shows Socrates as one of the greatest figures in human history. Such a difference the Early Church Fathers perceived when they called the Synoptic Gospels "the corporeal Gospels" and the fourth Gospel "the spiritual Gospel." "The first three Evangelists give us diverse aspects of one glorious landscape," writes Dean Farrar: "St. John pours over that landscape a flood of heavenly sunshine which seems to transfigure its very character, though every feature of the landscape remains the same."

The Synoptists emphasize Jesus' coming to the world; John emphasizes his coming from the Father: the Synoptists narrate chiefly Jesus' ministry in Galilee; John narrates his ministry in Judea and mainly in Jerusalem, grouping the events and discourses in Jesus' life around the great Jewish feasts held there: the Synoptists give more facts of Jesus' life; John gives more explanations of facts: the Synoptists include more of the deeds of Jesus; John includes more of the words and the mind of Jesus: the Synoptists give many miracles; John selects only such as are spiritual "signs": the Synoptists record his parables and addresses given to the multitude, the peasants of Galilee; John records his conversations with individuals, his words with the religious thinkers of Jerusalem: the Synoptists report his short, epigrammatic sayings about the common interests and conduct of everyday life; John reports his longer, intimate, argumentative discourses upon profoundly deep themes about the heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal: the Synoptists make us see and hear Jesus; John makes us apprehend him: the Synoptists give his teachings that inculcate love to one's neighbor; John gives his teachings that lead to faith in one's Savior.

Matthew pictures Jesus as the Messiah-King; Mark, as the Wonderful Servant; Luke, as the Son of Man; John, as the Son of God. Mr. Frederick Palmer compared John's Gospel to the work of a portrait painter. The greatness of a Rembrandt or Watts portrait, he reminds us, does not lie in the fact that it tells us of what color the subject's eyes were or what kind of coat he wore, but in showing us a human soul gazing from the canvas. It is such a likeness of Jesus that the Fourth Gospel gives. "St. Mark, with his eye for detail, records this and that circumstance which we welcome as furnishing the fact-basis for our conception of our Lord. Then comes St. John; and upon this background he paints so wonderfully that we behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God beaming forth in the face of Jesus Christ."

The Synoptic Gospels answer the question, "Who is the Son of Man?" The Fourth Gospel proves the assertion that "Jesus is the Son of God." What comes as a climax in the first three Gospels is the very starting-point in the Fourth Gospel. "The earlier Gospels tell us about Jesus as he appeared among the children of men," as Dr. David Smith writes in "Man's Need of God," "and you discover by and by, as the story proceeds, that this Man is something more than a man, and you reach at last the conviction that he is God. But St. John begins at the other end. Remember his immortal Prologue. He starts by saying: 'Now here is what I am going to

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tell you about—not the story of a human life, but the story of a Divine manifestation. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory.' That is St. John's starting-point; and the starting-point makes such a difference! He lifts us at once above Bethlehem. He never says a word about the inn or the manger: he carries us away up to the Throne of God and brings us down thence in company with the Incarnate Savior."

The Author of the Fourth Gospel. The old tradition is that when the Apostle John was over ninety years old, certain elders of the church came to him at Ephesus, and asked him to add to the first three Gospels whatever he thought necessary to make them more complete. To fulfill their request, he wrote in the Greek language, "The Gospel according to St. John." As early as the second century of our era we find the Fourth Gospel ascribed to the Apostle John by Irenaeus, Theophilus of Antioch, and Clement of Alexandria. Clement, "who had seen and conversed with Peter and Paul," is quoted by Eusebius (fourth century) as saying that "John, last of all, perceiving that what had reference to the external history of the Gospel of our Savior was sufficiently detailed, and being encouraged by friends and divinely influenced by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."

In the Gospel itself we do not find its author mentioned by name, but we do find at its close (in the appendix, which is thought not to have been the work of the author of the rest of the book) a solemn attestation that it was written by "the disciple whom Jesus loved." A study of the Gospel shows that it was written by one who was so familiar with the Jewish faith and ideas and customs that he must have been a Jew; so well acquainted with the topography of Jerusalem and with the Temple services that he must have been a Palestinian; so imbued with Greek literature and philosophy that he must have resided for a long time in Greek surroundings; so conversant with details that he must have been an eyewitness of the events themselves and must have companied with the Master from the beginning of his ministry; so loyal and loving that he must have been an apostle; so capable of understanding the inner life of his Lord that he must have been the most gifted and most favored of the apostles, the Apostle John.

John was a man of profound thought, of great soul, of keen religious insight. His spirit was illumined and guided by the Spirit of Truth; indeed, the words which introduce his Book of Revelation—"I was in the spirit"—would be a true introduction for his Gospel: only thus could he have given such a picture of the Christ.

He wrote only after his own view of the Christ had been enriched by meditation, after long years spent in living and pondering and preaching the Christ life, and Browning's words may be true—

"Much that at first, in deed and word
Was simply and sufficiently expressed,
Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
Of new significance and fresh result:
What first were guessed as points I now know stars
And named them in the Gospel I have writ."

The Apostle John. John was the younger of two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Salome. His father was a fisherman of Galilee in good circumstances, for he had "hired servants." His mother Salome was probably a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

John became one of the disciples of John the Baptist, and was led by the Baptist to attach himself to Jesus. After going with Jesus to Cana and to Jerusalem and back to Galilee through Samaria, he returned to his fishing for a time, till called to join Jesus as a permanent disciple; a little later he was chosen one of The Twelve. It is thought probable that he had a house in Jerusalem (19.27), and was personally acquainted with the high priest (18.15).

Jesus termed James and John, Boanerges, "Sons of Thunder," because of their impetuous spirit and vehement temper, which at rare intervals blazed forth (Mark 9.38, 10.35-40; Luke 9.49-55). Of the many disciples, the

seventy evangelists, and the twelve apostles, these two brothers and Peter shared the greatest degree of their Master's confidence, and of these three John was the one who lived in the closest intimacy with Jesus, the one whom preeminently Jesus loved. John followed Jesus to his trial and to the cross, and to him Jesus left the care of his mother. On the resurrection morning he went to the tomb with Peter, and there "he saw and believed." With the other disciples he conversed with Jesus after his resurrection. In his first Epistle John could say: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life, declare we unto you."

John remained a leader of the church throughout his long life. Paul refers to him and Peter and James as "reputed to be pillars." He was associated with Peter in the healing of the lame man at the door of the Temple, and in preaching of Christ in Jerusalem in spite of the threats of the Sanhedrin. Together they went on an apostolic mission to Samaria.

About 66 A.D. the war began which led to the destruction of Jerusalem, and John probably went with a great number of Christians to Pella, among the mountains of Gilead on the other side of the Jordan. Later he settled in Ephesus in Asia Minor, according to the authority of writers of the second century. In Revelation 1.9-11, there is a reference to his being banished by the Roman emperor to the isle of Patmos in the Ægean Sea, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. His three epistles were written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

John was the last survivor of the Apostles. He had seen the followers of Christ grow from a handful of faithful believers, mainly Galileans, gathered in a single "upper-room," into a great number, organized as churches, and scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

There is a pleasant story told by Jerome that in the Apostle's last years, when he was too feeble to preach, he was wont to have himself carried to the place of worship to repeat there the same words, "Little children, love one another." And when asked why he always said this, he replied: "It is the Lord's command; and if this alone be done, it is enough!"

When and for Whom the Fourth Gospel was Written. The majority of scholars believe that the Fourth Gospel was written for the whole Christian world by the Apostle John at Ephesus in Asia Minor about the year 85 A.D.

John's Purpose in Writing his Gospel. It was not John's purpose to give a complete life of Christ. It was not his aim to write a substitute for the other Gospels. It was not his task to record events and teachings which the other Evangelists omitted. His Gospel does complete and round out the other three, but it "fulfils" them only in the sense, as Canon Farrar explains, of "filling them with a diviner plenitude of meaning."

John aimed to give, not a record, but an interpretation of Christ's life. His aim is definitely stated in Jn. 20.30, 31, and in the light of this declaration his Gospel should be studied: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but *these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name.*" John would both awaken faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and also so strengthen the faith of believers in Christ that they may have life in his name, spiritual life, a life of constant communion with God.

Two words stand out in his Gospel above all others, "believe" and "witness." "Believe" or its equivalent occurs about one hundred times, "sounding out like the dominant chord of music running through a symphony. The word, 'witness' is like the chief warp-thread into which the fabric is being woven. The witnessing is that men may understand and believe. The belief, in turn, leads up to the witnessing that becomes the mastering passion in those who believe."

This singleness of aim guided John in his selection of facts from the great mass at his command (Jn. 21.25; 20.30), and in their treatment and arrangement: whatever did not subserve this purpose was rigidly excluded. To quote the words of Augustine: "St. John has lifted higher and far more sublimely than the other three his proclamation, and in lifting it up he has wished our hearts also to be lifted." He desired to lead his readers to such

intense conviction of the Divinity of Jesus that they would exclaim like Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

What John's Gospel Omits. Very striking are the omissions in this Gospel. It omits the whole record of the first thirty years of Jesus' life, telling nothing about his birth, infancy and boyhood. It shows us Jesus meeting John the Baptist at the Jordan, but it tells us nothing about the early life and ministry of the forerunner, and nothing about his death. It omits any mention of the baptism and temptation and transfiguration of Jesus, of his institution of the Lord's Supper, his agony in Gethsemane, his ascension. There are no children in this Gospel, no lepers, no demons, no Sermon on the Mount, and no parable (unless we term parables his words about the Good Shepherd and about the Vine). There is scarcely a word about the whole of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, and only seven of his miracles are recorded.

The Contents of John's Gospel. John is especially the historian of the Judean Ministry and of the Passion. Three-fourths of his entire Gospel is devoted to the last six months of Jesus' life. Of the twelve incidents which are common to John and the Synoptists, the main ones are those of Passion Week, where John has a much fuller record of Jesus' last words to his disciples. Of the thirty-three miracles, or signs, recorded of Jesus in all the Gospels, John gives but seven (besides his own Resurrection) and two of these are found also in the other three Gospels—the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the Sea of Galilee, both narrated because of their connection with the discourse that follows, wherein Jesus claims to be the Bread of Life, the Son of God.

About three thoughts the words of the Prologue cluster: the nature of the Word; the Word rejected; and the Word received. These three thoughts form the Gospel of John itself, for it is a history of the revelation of Christ, of the unbelief of the Jewish people as a whole, and of the faith of the disciples.

John begins with a proposition and then proceeds to demonstrate it. He asserts that the eternal Word of God had been manifested in Jesus of Nazareth—"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." John proves Jesus' divine Sonship by the testimony of those who knew him, by the signs he wrought, and by his self-disclosures. The word *witness* occurs forty-seven times in the book.

The witness of those who knew him. The witness to Jesus is borne by the Father and by the Spirit, by John the Baptist, by men who believed and men who disbelieved his Divine authority. The culminating point of all human witnessing is reached after the resurrection when Thomas, the most skeptical of his followers, cries out, "My Lord and my God." Here we might almost add the geometrical formula *Q.E.D.* (*Quod erat demonstrandum*, which was to be demonstrated). (The last chapter of the book is clearly an appendix, written to correct an erroneous belief that had gained currency in regard to John himself.)

The witness of the signs he wrought. "Ye have sent unto John (the Baptist) and he hath borne witness unto the truth," says Jesus; "but the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Of the works which Jesus did, the ability to do which he claims as evidence that God was working through him, John records seven: the changing of water into wine at Cana; the healing of the nobleman's son at a distance; the restoring to strength the man helpless for thirty-eight years; the feeding of the five thousand; the walking on the sea; the giving of sight to the man born blind; and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This selection John makes for the purpose of setting forth spiritual truths in connection with each; he relates these "signs" primarily for the sake of the conversations to which they give rise, which disclose the nature of God, the essential oneness of Christ with the Father, the mystical union of Christ with his people. (This is the Gospel of the conversations, for more than any other it gives the longer interviews with individuals, with Nathanael, with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well in Samaria, with Mary and Martha, and with his disciples.)

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The witness of his self-disclosures. The witness of Jesus to himself as the Revealer of the Father, as the One sent by the Father, is often given. Most striking is his repetition of the words "him that sent me," showing how conscious he was at all times of being "sent." The emphatic form of *I* in the Greek occurs some twenty-six times in connection with Jesus' claims. This is the Gospel of the "I am": "I am the Bread of life"; "I am the Living Bread"; "I am the Door"; "I am the Good Shepherd"; "I am the Light of the World"; "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; "I am the True Vine"; "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

The Effect of the Witnessing. The deeds and words and claims of Jesus produced two opposing results, and John shows the rise and development of each; the increasing faith and devotion of his disciples and Apostles which lead them to take up his work when he leaves them, and the increasing disbelief and hatred of the official Jews which bring him to the cross. All the incidents and words are arranged in a series of crises which progress as plainly as in any tragedy to the great crisis of the cross.

The Outline of the Gospel.

- I. Prologue. 1.1-18.
- II. The Witness to Christ of John the Baptist and of the Disciples. 1.19-51.
- III. The Witness to Christ of his "Signs" and "Works." 2.1-4.54.
 1. At Cana. 2.1-12.
 2. At Jerusalem. 2.13-3.36.
 3. In Samaria. 4.1-42.
 4. In Galilee. 4.43-54.
- IV. The Growth of Opposition to Christ's Claims. 5.1-12.50.
 1. After the Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda. 5.
 2. After the Feeding of the Five Thousand. 6.
 3. At the Feast of Tabernacles. 7; 8.
 4. After the Healing of the Man Born Blind. 9; 10.
 5. After the Resurrection of Lazarus. 11.
 6. After the Triumphal Entry. 12.
- V. The Witness of Christ to Himself. 13.1-17.26.
 1. The Last Ministry among his Disciples. 13.1-30.
 2. The Last Discourses. 13.31-16.33.
 3. The Farewell Prayer. 17.
- VI. The Witness of his Passion and Resurrection. 18.1-20.31.
 1. The Betrayal and Arrest. 18.1-12.
 2. The Trials and Peter's Denials. 18.13-19.16.
 3. The Crucifixion. 19.17-37.
 4. The Entombment. 19.38-42.
 5. The Resurrection Day. 20.1-25.
- VII. The Consummation of Belief. 20.26-31.
- VIII. The Epilogue. [21.

The Gospel as Literature. This Gospel has been called "the supreme literary work of the world," for marvelously does John write of

" Truth fulfilled and truth to be—
Never purer mystery
Did a purer tongue unfold."

From the mysterious and impressive words of the Prologue, which read like the opening movement of a great oratorio, on through the wonderfully beautiful words of the fourteenth and seventeenth chapters, where can one find a better union of simplicity and majesty of language with depth of thought? "The book is as simple as a child and as sublime as a seraph."

Note its dramatic unity and progress. "In the whole range of literature," says Dr. Marcus Dods, "there is no composition which is a more perfect work of art, or which more rigidly excludes whatever does not subserve its main end. From the first word to the last there is no paragraph, sentence, or expression which is out of place, or with which we could dis-

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pense. Part hangs together with part in perfect balance. The sequence may at times be obscure, but sequence there always is. The relevancy of this or that remark may not at first sight be apparent, but irrelevancy is impossible to this writer."

One peculiarity of the writing is evident to every one: it is shot through and through with the Evangelist's own personality, and his reflections are so fused with Christ's words that it is difficult at times to distinguish where the latter end and his own words begin.

Lessons for Today. "I once lived in a room where the sun rose before it was morning. Before my window a glorious old steeple shot its fearless spire hundreds of feet up into the sky and caught the sun's beams before it was over the city's horizon and flung them down into my room. Many a humble heart this day walks in faith because of this majestic, high Gospel. It flings down into the depths of the soul some of the light of the yet unseen sun of perfect vision" (Dr. James Lee Mitchell).

In this book are given the most satisfying revelations of the Fatherhood of God, of the Divinity of Christ, of the spiritual life of man. Ernesti calls it "the heart of Christ." It shows the way of salvation. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."

We find here the Christ of today as well as the Christ of yesterday. How personal seem the words of Christ here recorded! Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin's experience (in "The Creed of Jesus") is ours: "In the narratives of the other three Evangelists we are conscious of the particular circumstance under which Jesus is speaking and the particular persons he is speaking with. But in the fourth Gospel Nathanael and Nicodemus and Philip and Thomas ask their questions or venture a remark, and at once drop out of sight and are forgotten in the rest of the conversation, and, as we read, their mood or perplexity ceases to be theirs and becomes our own."

In a book where almost every verse is a shining gem, a message to the heart that will live for ever, it is impossible to mention the most helpful words. But John 3.16 and the fourteenth chapter are golden. Dr. John Watson suggests that the leaf which contains the fourteenth chapter should be made movable in our Bibles in order that it might be replaced every ten years. By the time one has reached middle age that leaf is thinning, and by old age it is only a brown film that is barely legible, and must be gently handled.

As early as the third century Origen voiced the thought of all ages when he said, "This Gospel is the consummation of all the Gospels, as the Gospels are of all the Scriptures." It contains the loftiest truths, the profoundest revelations in all the Bible, and is the best loved of all the Bible books, the best loved of all the books ever written. When Christian workers could put only one of the sixty-six books of the Bible into the hands of the soldiers of all the nations engaged in the great European War, they selected for them the book of John. This book furnishes the most helpful comfort for dying and the most inspiring motives for living. It is the one indispensable book.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES

Why Each is Divided. Written Greek covers far more space than does written Hebrew. In the Septuagint Version (the earliest and most important Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament Writings), two scrolls were used for each of the books of Kings and Chronicles, where in the original Hebrew only one had been necessary. Our English translations follow this Greek Version in dividing the books.

One of the last languages into which the Bible has been translated is Dabida, one of the dialects spoken in British East Africa. When the four Gospels had been separately issued, the Bible Society suggested a new edition of the four Gospels bound together. "But we can not do them in one volume," explained the translator, "for we have no appliances for such book-binding." Thus is repeated today the experiences of the first Greek translators of these historical books.

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The Writers. The Books themselves give us no information in regard to the writers, although they mention an official recorder, or chronicler. The books of Kings and Chronicles emphasize the fact that they are compilations by frequently referring to annals which have not come down to us. "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" is mentioned seventeen times, and "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" is mentioned fifteen times. A "Book of the Acts of Solomon" is referred to in 1 K. 11.41; "the history of Jehu, the son of Hanani, which is inserted in the book of the Kings of Israel" is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 20.34. These and yet other records mentioned as sources of information, or redactions from them, were the "original sources" used by the writers of our books of Kings and Chronicles. It is natural to suppose that Lives or Biographies of Elijah and Elisha furnished information in regard to these prophets, for "histories of Shemaiah, the Prophet, and of Iddo, the Seer" are referred to in Second Chronicles, 12.15.

The Methods of the Writers. At the time that the events of the Civil War took place much was written about it, and men who knew Lincoln wrote their estimation of him and recorded his sayings and deeds. Since then, biographers who had no personal knowledge of the War and who never saw Lincoln have written Lives of Lincoln, each from his own point of view. They went to "the original sources," as we call the records made at the time of the events, and from them selected the facts and incidents they wished to use for the purpose they had in mind; these they rewrote in their own words, and added their own thoughts in the way of explanations, inferences and deductions. If they had incorporated in their biographies the exact words of the original records, without quotation marks and without credit, and had welded them together with words of their own, they would have done what the Hebrew historians appear to have done who wrote the books of Kings and Chronicles. In that age it was not thought important that the names of the historians be perpetuated, and it was customary to insert bodily into a writing long portions of earlier records without mentioning their source.

The Purpose of the Writers. Kings and Chronicles are historical books, but they are wholly unlike modern historical narratives, being history written from a religious point of view, ecclesiastical history rather than political history. The Jews placed them in the section of the Old Testament known as "The Prophets," thereby indicating that their history is written from the prophetic standpoint, the ideas and principles and illustrations, rather than the facts, being of the greatest importance. A comparison of the word or two in Kings about the siege of Samaria and the verse or two about the fall of Jerusalem with Herodotus' account of the Battle of Salamis and Livy's account of the Battle of Cannæ has well shown the writers' lack of interest in the details of political history.

In these books we have what Browning calls "the spiritual life around the earthly life." The writers have recorded events in the life of the nation and of individuals that show the growth and the decay of the Hebrew kingdom, and have interpreted these events, revealing God's controlling hand through them all. There are two ways of writing history: "You can either leave God out," as Dr. Alexander Maclaren tells us, "or you can trace all things to him. The former way calls itself 'scientific' and 'positive.' The latter is the Bible way. Perhaps, if modern history were written on the same principle as the books of Kings, the Divine hand would be as plainly visible—only it requires an inspired historian to do it."

The historians looked at the kings and their ways from the high standpoint of whether the acts were pleasing or displeasing to God. With monotonous regularity we are told of each king of the Northern Kingdom, from Jeroboam to Hoshea, that "he did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord," and even of some of the good kings of the Southern Kingdom—Aza, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham—it is added that "nevertheless the high places were not removed."

Judgment is pronounced upon each king, not as to his ability or statesmanship, but as to his relation to God, and the space given to each reign does not depend upon its importance politically but upon whether it promoted or retarded the right worship of the Lord. Jeroboam II, who had a

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long, prosperous reign, is dismissed in two or three verses, while Ahab is dealt with at considerable length because in his reign occurred the great struggle against Baalism.

SECOND KINGS

The Title. First and Second Kings are called the Books of the Kings because they cover that part of Israel's history in which the kings reigned.

The Date. We must keep in mind the fact that Second Kings is a compilation, and that its final completion could not be earlier than the last date mentioned. The last verses of the book record the release of Jehoiachin from prison in 561 B.C., and of an allowance made him "all his life," hence the date must have been after his death, or about 550 B.C.

The Contents. Second Kings begins with the deaths of king Ahaziah and the prophet Elijah and continues the history of both kingdoms till the Northern was conquered by Assyria and the Southern by Babylon, a period of nearly three hundred years. Through it all we see the doom impending because of sins within and foes without, until inhabitants of each kingdom are carried away captive and the land is left desolate.

The Outline.

I. The History of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah until the Fall of Samaria. 2 K. 1-17.

1. Ahaziah in Israel. 2 K. 1.
2. The Prophet Elisha. 2 K. 2.1-8.15; 13.14-21.
3. Jehoram and Ahaziah in Judah. 2 K. 8.16-29.
4. Jehu in Israel. 2 K. 9 and 10.
5. Athaliah and Jehoash in Judah. 2 K. 11 and 12.
6. Jehoahaz and Jehoash in Israel. 2 K. 13.1-13.
 - a. Wars with Moab and Syria. 2 K. 13.22-25.
7. Amaziah and Azariah in Judah. 2 K. 14.1-22; 15.1-7.
8. Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah in Israel. 2 K. 14.23-29; 15.8-31.
 - a. Assyrian Invasion under Tiglath-Pileser. 2 K. 15.29.
9. Jotham and Ahaz in Judea. 2 K. 15.32-16.20.
 - a. Saved from Syria through Allegiance to Tiglath Pileser of Assyria. 2 K. 15.5-18.
10. Israel Conquered by Assyria in Hoshea's Reign and Carried into Captivity. 2 K. 17.1-41.
 - a. Foreigners brought into Samaria. 2 K. 17.24-41.

II. The History of the Kingdom of Judah from the Fall of the Kingdom of Israel until the Babylonian Exile. 2 K. 18.1-25.37.

1. Hezekiah's Reign. 2 K. 18-20.
 - a. Invasion of Sennacherib. 2 K. 18.13-37.
 - b. Isaiah's Prophecy of Deliverance. 2 K. 19.20-34.
2. Manasseh's and Amon's Reigns. 2 K. 21.1-26.
3. Josiah's Reign. 2 K. 22.1-23.30.
4. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim's Reigns. 2 K. 23.31-24.6.
 - a. Jehoahaz Deposed by Pharaoh of Egypt. 2 K. 23.33.
 - b. Jehoiakim Subject to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. 2 K. 24.1-5.
5. Jehoiachin's Reign. 2 K. 24.6-9.
 - a. The Captivity Begins. 2 K. 24.10-16.
6. Zedekiah's Reign. 2 K. 24.17-19.
7. Jerusalem Captured and Judah Carried into Exile in Babylon. 2 K. 25.
 - a. The City Laid Waste and Temple Destroyed. 2 K. 25.1-21.
 - b. Gedaliah made Governor of Judah. 2 K. 25.22-26.
 - c. Jehoiachin Kindly Treated by Evil-Merodach. 2 K. 25.27-30.

As Literature. There is a monotonous uniformity about the accounts of the kings; as a rule they are as lifeless as some extracts from modern official documents. Most of them read like bare summaries of more expanded writings. The "framework" of each record is as follows:

I. Date of the king's accession according to the year of the contemporary

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king of the other kingdom; his age at the time; the duration of his reign; the name of his mother.

II. An account of his deeds and pronouncement of judgment thereon. Sometimes parts I and III are all that are given, the writer not deeming it necessary to give the facts on which he bases his praise or condemnation.

III. A reference to the source of some of the writer's information; a notice of the king's death and burial; the name of his successor.

"The historian has been blamed for the perpetual gloom which enwraps his narrative," says Canon Farrar, "but surely the criticism is unjust. He did not invent his story. The picture is, after all, far less gloomy than that presented in many a great historic record. Consider the features of such an age as that recorded by Tacitus, with the 'Iliad of woes' of which he was the annalist, the long ages of darkness in the fifth and following centuries; of the Northmen; the condition of England in the middle of the fourteenth century when the Black Death swept away half of her population; the extreme misery of the masses after the Thirty Years' War; or the desolating horrors of the wars of Napoleon which filled Germany with homeless and starving orphans. The annals of the Hebrew monarchy are less grim than these."

The contrast between the accounts of the lives of the kings and those of the prophets is most striking. Elijah and Elisha loom large (1 K. 17-2 K. 8, with a few exceptions), their stories occupy nearly a third of the books. Here we are in another atmosphere. The narratives are graphic and stirring, rich in picturesque and vivid detail, and told with splendid dramatic power.

Lessons for Today. The one main lesson which the narrative of the books of Kings is meant to teach, Canon Farrar points out, is absolute faith and trust in God as an anchor which holds amid the wildest storms of ruin, and of apparently final failure. It shows us that duty is the reward of duty, and that there can be no happiness save for those who have learned that duty and blessedness are one. And thus even by this book of annals—annals of wild deeds and troubled times—we may be taught the truths which find their perfect illustration and proof in the life and teaching of the Son of God.

SECOND CHRONICLES

The Title. In the Hebrew the two books of Chronicles are called "The Words of the Day," that is, "The Journal." Jerome first gave them the name of Chronicles, in his Latin Translation. The Septuagint (Greek) Version calls them "The Things Omitted": they contain information omitted in Samuel and Kings in regard to the worship at Jerusalem, as well as a repetition, often with additional facts and observations, of portions of those books. The Syrian title is "The Book of the Transactions of the Kings of Judah": after the Disruption the record of Judah only is given.

The Date. The writing is generally assigned to 300 B.C., when it was necessary to inform those who had returned from Captivity of the former glory of the Temple and of their need of it and its worship.

The Contents. Second Chronicles furnishes a condensed history of events in Judah and an account of the worship of the Israelites from the accession of Solomon to the captivity of Judah. The decree of Cyrus permitting the rebuilding of the Temple is added. Upon the division of the Kingdom, Second Chronicles omits entirely the history of Northern Israel, save for an occasional bare reference, given incidentally, because of its connection with the Kingdom of Judah. In 2 Ch. 25.7 we are told that "Jehovah is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim": this, seemingly, is the belief of the Chronicler throughout his record.

While the writers of Kings and Chronicles alike give a succession of narratives, not for the sake of the history, but for the sake of their religious import, and are alike interested in the correct worship of Jehovah in the Temple at Jerusalem, yet for the Chronicler as not for the writer of Kings all ritual interests are of superior importance. The Chronicler's interest lies primarily in the Temple with its worship, its priests, Levites and

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singers, and secondarily he is intent upon pointing the moral, in declaring that sin is followed by punishment and that goodness is rewarded.

The Outline.

- I. Solomon's Reign. 2 Ch. 1-9.
 1. His Prosperity. 2 Ch. 1-2; 8-9.
 2. Building and Consecration of Temple. 2 Ch. 3-7.
 3. His Death. 2 Ch. 9-29-31.
- II. The Kings of Judah from the Disruption till the Return from Captivity. 2 Ch. 10-36.
 1. Revolt of the Ten Tribes under Jeroboam. 2 Ch. 10.1-11.4.
 2. Degeneracy under Rehoboam and Abijah. 2 Ch. 11.5-13.22.
 3. Reforms under Asa and Jehoshaphat. 2 Ch. 14-20
 4. Degeneracy under Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah. 2 Ch. 21-23.
 5. Reform under Joash. 2 Ch. 24.
 6. Degeneracy under Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz. 2 Ch. 25-28.
 7. Reform under Hezekiah. 2 Ch. 29-32.
 8. Degeneracy under Manasseh and Amon. 2 Ch. 33.
 9. Reform under Josiah. 2 Ch. 34-35.
 10. Degeneracy under Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. 2 Ch. 36.1-16.
 11. Captivity. 2 Ch. 36.1-23.

Lessons for Today. Professor Edward L. Curtis, in his commentary, gives this just estimate of the value of this book: "The religious value of Chronicles lies in the emphasis given to the institutional forms of religion. Forms, ceremonies, institutions of one sort or another, are necessary for the maintenance of religious life. However narrow the Chronicler's teachings may be considered, and however artificial their products, without the shell of Judaistic legalism and ecclesiasticism it is difficult to see how the precious truths of Divine revelation in Hebrew prophecy could have been preserved. Otherwise, amid encroaching forces of the Persian, Greek and Roman civilizations they would have been dissipated, and no place would have been prepared for the appearance of Christ and the growth of Christianity."

Yet the obvious sacerdotalism, prominent as it is, does not obscure the greatest thoughts of the book, the belief in a righteous God, "Jehovah the Good," and the deep concern for fidelity to him. In the beautiful prayer uttered by Hezekiah we see this triumph over ritualism: "The good Jehovah pardon everyone that setteth his heart to seek God, Jehovah, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." And it is a God who is omnipotent, who stirs up the heart of Pul and of Tiglath-Pileser, kings of Assyria, as well as the hearts of the children of Israel; who is omniscient—"His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth" (2. Ch. 16.9; "he searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts, and if one seeks him he will be found of him," 1 Ch. 28.9; he is also merciful; "Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him," 2 Ch. 30.9.

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

The Titles. In the Hebrew canon and in the Talmud Ezra and Nehemiah, like First and Second Kings, and First and Second Chronicles, form a single book. It was Origen (third century of our era) who first divided the volume into two parts calling them first and second Esdras, and it was Jerome (fifth century) who first gave the name of Nehemiah to the second part.

The Writers. The leading actors in the history are Ezra and Nehemiah, and the writings of each are preserved in the "I sections" of the books (those in which the narrative is told in the first person). It would have been possible for Ezra to write the entire book that bears his name, depending for the earlier history with which he was not connected, which occurred some sixty years before he came to Jerusalem, upon a narrative written by a

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contemporary of Jerubbabel. But it would not have been possible for Nehemiah to write all of the book of Nehemiah, for there are certain statements which could only have been written much later than Nehemiah's day. In Neh. 12.11, 22, Jaddua is mentioned, who was a high priest in the time of Alexander the Great, a century later than Nehemiah. "Darius the Persian" is mentioned in Neh. 12.22; had not the Persian Empire passed away at that writing, Nehemiah would naturally have said, "the king," or "king Darius." And in Neh. 12.26, 47, there is a looking back to "the days of Nehemiah."

The books include the authentic memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah together with historical summaries written, not in Hebrew like the rest of the books, but in Aramaic, and "state documents," all put together, it is believed by scholars, by "the Chronicler," the one who edited the books of Chronicles.

The last two verses of Second Chronicles and the first two verses of Ezra are the same. Noticeable, too, are the similarity of phrases in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, the similar regard for the Law, the interest in the details of Temple worship, and the fondness for long genealogical lists.

The Date. Ezra the priest and scribe went from Babylon to Judea in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, B.C. 458, and his memoirs were probably written a year or so later. Since Nehemiah made his second visit to Jerusalem in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, 432 B.C. his memoirs are assigned to about 430 B.C. The entire books as we now have them, if edited by one writer, must be assigned to a century later.

The Contents. The history of the books of Kings and Chronicles practically closes with the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the laying waste of the city and the destruction of the Temple and city walls, and the deportation to Babylonia of the best part of its inhabitants. Fifty years pass, and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah take up the history of the Jews at the first return to Jerusalem of exiles from Babylonia in the reign of Cyrus, 536 B.C. and continue it through the first hundred years of Persian domination, down to the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in 432 B.C.

There is a gap of sixty years between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra, and another of twelve or thirteen years between Ezra and Nehemiah, and the regular sequence of events is not always followed. In part the two books cover the same ground, and together they furnish a record of the re-founding of the nation, rebuilding of the Temple and of the city walls, the reestablishing of the Temple worship and the instituting of reforms in Jerusalem during these years under Persian rule. Ezra is, in brief, the Book of the Temple-building, while Nehemiah is the Book of the Wall-building and of the Reading of the Law.

The Outline of Ezra.

- I. The Mission of Zerubbabel. 1-6.
 1. The Edict of Cyrus. 1.
 2. List of Returning Exiles. 2.
 3. Sacrificial Worship Resumed and Building of the Temple Begun. 3.
 4. Opposition of Adversaries, Cessation of Work. 4.
 5. Building Resumed and Completed, and Temple Dedicated. 5-6.
- II. The Mission of Ezra. 7-10.
 1. Letter of Artaxerxes, and Journey of Ezra and List of Returning Exiles. 7-8.
 2. Ezra's Reforms. 9-10.

The Book of Ezra as Literature. Ezra is a dignified, somewhat prosaic, unvarnished tale, wholly lacking in stirring incidents, which rises to eloquence only in the prayer of Ezra (9.6-15). Ezra appears as an energetic, intensely patriotic and deeply religious, but rather formal ecclesiastic.

Lessons for Today from Ezra. The historical interest in both these books is great, for they are our only source of information concerning the period they cover. Ezra's spirit of intense devotion to God, zealous patriotism and uncompromising loyalty to principle, furnish lessons much needed in our own times.

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The Outline of Nehemiah.

- I. The Mission of Nehemiah. 1-7.
 1. His Grief over Jerusalem and his Prayer. 1.
 2. Artaxerxes' Permission, Nehemiah's Arrival in Jerusalem and Midnight Ride about the Ruined Walls. 2.
 3. Details of the Building of the Wall. 3.
 4. Ridicule and Opposition of Enemies. 4.
 5. Complaints about Usury Settled. 5.
 6. The Walls Finished despite Enemies' Plots. 6.
 7. List of those who Returned. 7.
- II. The Reading of the Law and its Effects. 8-10.
 1. Reading of the Law by Ezra; Feast of Tabernacles Observed. 8.
 2. Prayer of the Levites. 9.
 3. Covenant of the People. 10.
- III. The Settlement of the Cities. 11-13.
 1. Lists of the People. 11.1-12.26.
 2. Dedication of the Wall and Temple Ordinances. 12.27-13.3.
 3. Various Reforms. 13.4-31.

The Book of Nehemiah as Literature. Nehemiah is characterized by a directness and vigor that are captivating. The scene of the cupbearer before the king and that of the solitary midnight ride around the ruined walls of Jerusalem, are especially vividly portrayed. The memoirs have many interesting biographical touches, little notes thrown in which tell of Nehemiah's own feelings and private actions, as in the second chapter where he observes, "Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence," and, "Then I was sore afraid," and yet again, "So I prayed to the God of heaven,"—three such little observations in the course of four verses. Characteristic of the book are the ejaculatory prayers—flashes of thought—introduced parenthetically into the narrative.

Lessons for Today from Nehemiah. In Nehemiah the man we have a type of what the present day Christian should be. He was a strong man, self-reliant and yet humbly and trustfully dependent on God, a devout man of prayer and a daring man of action, keen, cautious, resourceful, energetic, persistent. He had a genius for organization, and was a born leader of men, and all his practical qualities were consecrated to noble endeavor. The book is a lesson upon practical piety: "no portion of the Bible gives more valuable suggestions for the wise business conduct of church affairs."

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The Authorship of the Book. The odes and orations that are gathered in this one book make it the second longest prophetic book of the Bible. How many of them were written by Isaiah is a much discussed question. The problem is well stated by Dr. George Adam Smith. "In a book called by the name of the prophet Isaiah, who flourished between 740 and 700 B.C., the last twenty-seven chapters deal with the captivity suffered by the Jews in Babylon from 598 to 538 B.C. and more particularly with the advent about 550 B.C. of Cyrus, whom they name. Are we to take for granted that Isaiah himself prophetically wrote these chapters, or must we assign them to a nameless author or authors of the period of which they treat?"

"Prophecy is a moral, not a magical thing; and nothing would be gained by the delivery of a message over a century and a half before it was needed, to a people to whom it was irrelevant and unintelligible." Moreover, there is no suggestion in the chapters themselves that the author is living in some other period and prophesying about events to come at least a hundred and fifty years hence. Nor is there any suggestion that the one who brought the prophecies together intended them all to be taken as the words of the prophet Isaiah; some are distinctly called "the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz," but more are without any designation.

The two parts differ not only in standpoint and contents, but in style. Plainly the book is not a unity. It is not throughout the work of a single prophet nor of a single age.

In general, chapters 1-34 are the words of the prophet Isaiah; chapters

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36-39 form a sort of historical appendix which looks both backward and forward, and is found also with some variations in 2 K. 18.13-20.19. Chapters 40-66 are ascribed to "the Second Isaiah," or to "the Great Unknown."

Within the first group are sections which seem to imply historical circumstances that did not arise till long after Isaiah's death (chapter 13; chapter 14 to verse 23; chapters 24-27 and 34-35). Of the last sections, chapters 56-66 are by some scholars referred to a later date than chapters 40-55.

The Prophet Isaiah and his Message. Four great Hebrew prophets lived in the eighth century B.C.: Amos and Hosea, who spoke in Israel, and Isaiah and Micah, who spoke in Judah. The greatest of them, in truth the greatest of all the prophets, was Isaiah, the son of Amoz. He was one of the most wonderful men of the Old Testament. Whether or not he was of royal lineage—the brother of the king as the rabbis said—he was regal in character, a courtier and a scholar. He preached at Jerusalem during the last forty years of the eighth century, in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. His odes and orations were treasured in the memories of a band of faithful disciples, just as he had delivered them, and at his direction were written down, Isa. 8.16-30.8. According to tradition he met a martyr's death at the hands of king Manasseh.

Among all the great spokesmen for God in Old Testament times none possessed a more brilliant mind than Isaiah. Orator, poet, statesman, theologian, reformer, all these was he.

What a wonderful orator he must have been, one of the world's greatest! "His platform was the busy thoroughfare, the steps of the temple, the corner of the street; and we can without difficulty picture for ourselves the prophet, now with a few disciples at his feet, again with thousands of Jerusalem's citizens hanging on his words; a young man when his heart was stirred by the profligacy of his times; a middle-aged man when he describes the coming doom of Samaria; an old man, yet still full of fire and vigor in these last great days when Sennacherib's host threatened to wipe Israel off the face of the earth."

Only Moses was superior to Isaiah as the statesman. From the year of king Uzziah's death, 739 B.C., until the fall of Jerusalem in 701 B.C., Isaiah interpreted to his people the purposes of God, in language which glows with moral fervor. We have the historical background of his career in the Second Book of Kings. There we see the gradual advance westward of Assyria, the taking of cities on the northeastern border of Syria in 740 B.C., the fall of Damascus in 732 B.C., of Samaria in 721 B.C., of the Philistine cities in 711 B.C., and of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

Isaiah faced conditions squarely, saw their true meaning and far-reaching tendencies, and counseled kings and nations, from the standpoint of the Divine Ruler who shapes all history. He well understood the weakness of the Egyptian power and the vanity of her promises; he saw the greatness of the Assyrian power and the disastrous results that alliance with her would bring about; he wisely counseled the avoidance of all entangling alliances with foreign powers, and the reliance upon the help of the Lord. When once allegiance to Assyria was promised, however, he knew the futility of breaking away, and in the face of the bitterest opposition he counseled loyalty to the promises made. He was a stern lover of justice, and when still later Sennacherib's demands were clearly unjust, he advised Hezekiah to defy him. "Through the varying political crises he calmly and with that conviction which comes only from the grasp of eternal principles, and an intimate touch with him who rules the universe, offered counsels which though usually rejected, were shown by later events to have been supremely wise and sane."

As a preacher of righteousness he was open-eyed and outspoken, seeing everything, "from the court intrigues to a woman's crimping-pins." With absolute sincerity, uncompromising severity, and unflinching courage he attacked the evils of his time, pouring contempt upon weak, cowardly King Ahaz as readily as in scathing words he denounced the social and political corruption of the people.

There are four great ideas in Isaiah's writings: the sin of the nation, the impending punishment at the hands of Assyria, the survival of the remnant,

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and the happy future. In prosperous days he preached that calamity was rapidly approaching because of flagrant unrighteousness, but when the calamity had come his words were full of hope.

Nowhere is Isaiah greater than when he refers to the reign of the Righteous King, who is to us the Christ, the One who shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as a shade of a great rock in a weary land.

"The Great Unknown" and his Message. The writer of the last part of the book is speaking to the people as the Babylonian captivity is drawing to its close: the punishment predicted by Isaiah has been endured and has taught its lesson, and now the prophecy is of a restoration near at hand to the city and Temple. This fervid patriot is very tender in his message to his people. His opening words—which form the beginning of Handel's marvelous Oratorio, "The Messiah"—have given to his writings the title of "The Book of Consolation": "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins."

No better designation can we give to this prophet of this last part of the book than that of "The Great Unknown," but he has also well been called "The Evangelical Prophet," because of his references to the Messiah, especially in the great Fifty-third Chapter. More clearly than Isaiah even he saw God and God's plan of salvation. He had the world-wide vision of God's Salvation reaching to the ends of the earth (49.6), and of his house being a house of prayer for all peoples (56.8). "He is of all the prophets the most majestic in his style, as the most spiritual in his message," says Dr. Lyman Abbott. "The truths that God is One, and is a righteous God, and demands righteousness of his children, and will accept nothing less and asks for nothing more, he might have learned from Amos and Hosea and Micah and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel; but he added what none of them saw, the truths that the sorrowing ones are the triumphant ones, that suffering love is conquering love, that sorrow is victor. Christ's life and death will illustrate and exemplify this truth. Paul, the poet philosopher of the first century, will expand and apply it. But neither literature nor life has any higher message to give to the world than the message of this prophet, who has exemplified his own doctrine of self-abnegation by leaving his writings to be bound up with those of a predecessor, while he himself remains forever unknown."

The Outline of the Book of Isaiah.

- I. Prophecies of Isaiah in the Time of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah. 1-35.
 1. Perverseness of God's People. 1.
 2. Judgment Imminent because of their Sins. 2-5.
(Parable of Vineyard, 5.1-7; "Woes," 5.8-23.)
 3. Isaiah's Vision and Call. 6.
 4. Various Prophecies. 7-12.
(The Child Immanuel, 7-14; Birth and Reign of the Prince of Peace, 9.1-7; Assyria shall be Punished, 10.5-12; A Remnant of Israel shall Return, 10.20-23; Reign of the Branch from Jesse's Roots, 11; Song of Thanksgiving, 12.)
 5. Prophecies concerning Foreign Nations. 13-27.
(Song of Praise for Jehovah's Favor, 25; Song of Trust in his Protection, 26.)
 6. Prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 28-35.
(Condemnation for Drunkenness, 28.1-13; Parable from Husbandry, 28.23-19; Reign of the Righteous King, 32.1-8; God's Indignation against Judah's Enemies, 34; Zion's Happy Future, 35.)
- II. Historical Section. 36-39.
 1. Sennacherib's Invasion. 36-37.
(Hezekiah's Prayer, 37.14-20.)
 2. Hezekiah's Recovery from Sickness and his Song of Thanksgiving. 38.
 3. Messengers from Babylon. 39.

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- III. Prophecies of "The Great Unknown," at the Close of the Exile or Later. 40-66.
1. Encouragement to the Exiles in Babylon. 40-56.
 - a. Jehovah's Promised Deliverance. 40-48.
(The Greatness of Jehovah, 40.10-26; the Only God, 44.6-8; the Only Savior, 45.18-25.)
 - b. The Deliverer. 49-56.
(The Servant of the Lord, 41.8-20; 42.1-7, 18-25; 43.5-10; 49.1-9; 50.4-10; 52.13-53.12.)
 2. Counsels and Encouragement chiefly to those Living in the Time of Ezra. 57-66.

The Book of Isaiah as Literature. Sechele, a savage chief who had learned to read the Bible, amazed Livingstone one day by remarking, "Teacher, this man Isaiah, is a very fine man: he knows how to write." His untutored mind had unaided discovered something of Isaiah's magnificent literary genius. Washington Irving said that before beginning to write he usually read a passage from Isaiah "to fire his mind," and Daniel Webster's customary preparation for the delivery of an oration was to read the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. "The beauty of expression, as well as the depths of thought, are marvelous," said Matthew Arnold.

The book has rich variety and splendor of diction—epic, lyric, and dramatic. Isaiah has been called the most poetic of all the bards of Israel. In our English translation we are unable to see that the greater part of his addresses are poetry, and that "through them all a marvelous lilt and balanced parallelism runs."

More marked is the presence of the dramatic element, "beginning at the moment of Isaiah's first entrance, where like the Greek chorus he calls upon heaven and earth to witness the ingratitude of Israel, clearly manifest in the watchman of Chapter 21, who brings tidings from Babylon and answers the call of Edom; and especially prominent at the close of Chapter 10, when the terrible Assyrian speeds from point to point till at Nob he shakes his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion."

It is the soul that makes the great speaker and writer, and Isaiah's was a great soul. "He lived perpetually in the glory of the Divine majesty." Nowhere will one find profounder thought combined with more glowing feeling, more powerful imagination, and more eloquent oratory—impassioned and moving—than in the book of Isaiah. The prophet wields at times a two-edged sword, and all his words are instinct with spiritual fire. Where shall we find his equal in versatility? He is a master of satire and pathos, of proverb and parable, of simile and metaphor. His figures of speech are always concrete and so apt that however often one reads them their power strikes one anew. From his first words where the heavens are contrasted with the earth, the heavens and earth together with Jehovah, Jehovah with man, his sinful creation, and man with his faithful ox and ass, Isaiah's vivid style is marked by sudden contrasts.

It is difficult to select passages of sustained oratory, vigorous rhetoric, exquisite literary quality, because they are so numerous. The fifty-third chapter is sublime.

Lessons for Today. Dr. Faunce has well remarked that hundreds of students can prove the existence of two Isaiahs who have never felt the thrill of real contact with either of them. It is true that real contact with either of them does produce a thrill.

Among all the Old Testament books humanity has received only from the book of Psalms greater help than from the book of Isaiah. We can go to this book for light upon the political and social questions which are always with us, and listen to the tremendous invectives against drunkenness and greed and injustice. As Dr. Willits observes, "The moral awakening of the world in our day is due in no small degree to the rediscovery of the prophets of Israel, and among those whose messages have been found timely and convincing Isaiah holds a chief place. The city is the great social problem of the age, and Isaiah is the Old Testament specialist on that theme. The sins of the city, its volatile and vibrant life, its opulence, and its pride, all find place in his thought and speech. Our modern city problems are more

complex than were those of his time, for sin, which was then largely individual, is today organized and exploited for profit. But the eternal principles which Isaiah applied to the evils of his day are the principles of our age and for all time, for they are the basic truth revealed by the Holy One of Israel."

No other inspired writer has so represented the sublime majesty and holiness of God. We have a wonderful lesson upon this theme (Lesson I of the Third Quarter), about the vision which made Isaiah a prophet, when he "saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple."

"Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts:
The whole earth is full of his glory."

These words from the lips of the adoring seraphim give Isaiah's lofty conception of God. The sovereignty of God Isaiah also proclaims, for this holy Being is God not of Israel alone: the fullness of the whole earth is his glory.

There is no prophet up to this time who so emphasized the individual responsibility of man. "He is firm to declare that the wages of sin is death, but he never crushed men beneath the fear of judgment without revealing to them the possibility and beauty of victorious virtue." "Come back, come back, for why will ye die?" is the refrain that follows every denunciation. If you will only return to the Lord, all will yet be well, your fate rests with you.

Especially is Isaiah the prophet of trust. "In quietness and confidence your strength shall be" (30.15), is his insistent teaching, and "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee," is his song of trust.

In the writing of "the Second Isaiah" "there is that sense of sin with which Israel entered exile, and which has made the literature of Israel's Exile the confessional of the world; there is that great unexhausted program of the Service of God and Man, which our prophet lays down as Israel's duty and example to humanity; and there is that prophecy of the virtue and glory of vicarious suffering for sin, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ and his cross."

In "the servant passages," as they are called, those in which the author describes "the servant of Jehovah," we have our prophet's ideal of the true teacher, patient, sympathetic, suffering, who leads men to the knowledge of God, and by his heroic endurance of persecution atones for the sins of others. Because Christ is the Perfect Servant, the Redeemer who has fulfilled that matchless ideal of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, this is the best-loved chapter of the whole book.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The Prophet Daniel. Ezekiel 14.14, 20 refers to Daniel together with Noah and Job as an example of a man noted for his righteousness. The connection of Daniel's name with the name of Noah and Job seems singular if the reference is to the prophet who according to the Book of Daniel was a young contemporary of the prophet Ezekiel himself.

Daniel in the book bearing his name was a descendant of one of the highest families in Judah (1.3), who was carried captive to Babylon (when but a boy according to Jerome) in the third year of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, 605 B.C. There he was educated, gained favor with King Nebuchadnezzar, and was appointed by him governor of the province of Babylon. Under Nebuchadnezzar's immediate successors we lose sight of him till the time of Belshazzar. He lived till the reign of Cyrus the Great. A tomb in Susa is claimed by Mohammedans as his tomb.

The Author of the Book of Daniel. The book takes its name from that of its hero. The first, or narrative, part is written in the third person, the hero is spoken of historically; the visions of the last part are those of Daniel, narrated in the first person, but twice introduced by a verse in the third person, 7.1 and 10.1. It does not appear that Daniel was the author of the book nor that the unknown prophet who wrote it intended it to be received as the work of Daniel.

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Views in Regard to the Book and Its Date. In the Jewish canon the book of Daniel is not placed with the prophetic books, but with "The Writings," between Esther and Ezra. That it was not included among the "Latter Prophets" is thought to indicate that it could not have been written in the sixth century. No satisfactory reason has been given for the fact that it was written in two languages, 2.4b-7.28 being in Aramaic, and the earlier and later parts of the book in Hebrew. (In references *b* stands for *second clause*.)

By some scholars the book is considered wholly historical and is held to have been written at the time of the events narrated. Other scholars hold that its basis is historical, but that it was written to encourage the Jews when under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes they were passing through furnaces of affliction. As early as the third century of our era Porphyry maintained that the book was written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. By yet other scholars it is considered a *maschal*, or parable, written for didactic purposes. There are difficulties connected with each of these points of view, but many of them disappear when we think of the book as a product of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, who ruled Syria from 175-164 B.C.

Some Troublesome Historical Statements. Several statements in the book that have seemed erroneous and have led many to reject it, have been satisfactorily explained by recent discoveries in ancient inscriptions. Others still await solution. New discoveries are constantly proving false the assumption that the Scriptures are in error where secular history does not corroborate them. For example, the book gives Belshazzar as the name of the last Chaldean king of Babylon, but we know from secular history that the last king was Nabonidus. Some have therefore declared that Belshazzar never existed. Then came the discovery in the ruins of a temple at Mugheir (Ur) of an inscription giving an account of the restoration of the temple of Sin, the Moon-god, by Nabonidus (called Nabonahid), in which these words occur: "As for me, Nabonibus, King of Babylon, from sin against thy great divinity save me, and a life of remote days give as a gift; and as for Belshazzar, the eldest son, the offspring of my heart, the fear of thy great divinity cause thou to exist in his heart, and not let sin possess him." Belshazzar then, was the heir to the throne of Babylon, although the monuments do not indicate that he ever reigned. The Book of Daniel calls him King of Babylon; he seems to have been the commander of the army, and he may have governed Babylon as viceroy and have been popularly known as king, or he may have actually shared the throne with his father Nabonidus.

The statement in 5.31 that it was Darius the Mede (not Cyrus nor Gobryas) who received the Kingdom after the overthrow of Belshazzar has caused much trouble. No ruler by the name of Darius, till the third one after Cyrus, is referred to by any historian or by any inscription. Could he have been a vassal of Cyrus? Contract tables have been found which speak of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, as "the King of Babylon" in the first year of Cyrus, and call the latter "the King of countries": perhaps Darius was another such "King of Babylon," a vassal of Cyrus, or possibly Darius is another name for Gobryas, Cyrus's general to whom he entrusted the government.

The Message of Daniel. The Book consists of two distinct portions, the first in narrative form containing a series of stories about Daniel or his companions; the second in prophetic form containing a series of visions of Daniel.

We know that the exile lasted seventy years from the Earlier Captivity, but we have no book in the Bible which gives an account of the life in Babylon; as Professor Moulton has said, the history of Israel during the Exile is in the position of a river which runs for a time underground before it returns to view. From the Book of Daniel we learn that in their exile the Israelites remained true to Jehovah. The subject of the prophetic portion is the expectation of "the last days," the Golden Age, that is, for Israel. It is often called "The Apocalypse of the Old Testament." The Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse of the New Testament, adopts the imagery of Daniel in its visions concerning the deliverance of the glorified Christ in the last days. "In the most skillful way the Book of Daniel reaches its splendid

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climax. The author shows his readers how the fidelity of men like Daniel and his friends was rewarded by deliverance from the lions and the flames, and then takes them down through the centuries in which successive empires were all unconsciously working out his predetermined plan, and on to the darkest days in history—so dark, because the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of God was so soon to dawn. Let them only be patient a little longer, 12.12, and their enemies will be crushed, and the Kingdom of God will come—that Kingdom which shall know no end."

The visions that occupy the second half of the book are different from those of other Old Testament Prophets. They have little bearing on Daniel's circumstances in Babylon, and are remarkably circumstantial and minute as regards the distant future. If the book dates from the close of the period to which its visions refer, the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, then the visions are "past history thrown by the author into the guise of ancient prediction." Then, the unknown prophet chose this method as a forcible way in which to express his truth that everything that had happened was in accord with Divine foreknowledge and purpose.

Outline of the Book.

- I. Narrative Section. Experiences of Daniel and his companions. 1-6.
 1. Daniel and his companions refuse to defile themselves by eating the king's food. Chapter 1.
 2. Daniel interprets the king's dream. Chapter 2.
 3. Daniel's friends refuse to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, and are miraculously saved in the furnace of fire. Chapter 3.
 4. Daniel interprets another royal dream. Chapter 4.
 5. Daniel interprets the mysterious handwriting on the wall as a prediction of the overthrow of Belshazzar's kingdom. Chapter 5.
 6. Daniel saved in the den of lions. Chapter 6.
- II. Prophetic Section. Visions of Daniel. 7-12.
 1. The Four Beasts. Chapter 7.
 2. The Ram and the Goat. Chapter 8.
 3. The Seventy Weeks. Chapter 9.
 4. The Kings of the North and South. Chapters 10.12.

As Literature. The two parts of the book are wholly different. In the first part the stories about Daniel and his fellow exiles in Babylon are simply told, yet with great dramatic power. The second part is rhetorical: peculiar to it are its symbolisms, imagery, angels—the sense of mystery that pervades it.

Lessons for Today. The truth in regard to the date of the book may never positively be known, but the truth of its vividly taught lessons need never be lost. The book is emphatically "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Daniel is one of the rare Old Testament characters without guile; no sins are graven on his escutcheon, as Shakespeare's words—"a Daniel come to judgment"—bear witness. In him we have an example of steadfast fidelity to the dictates of conscience, no matter what the consequences, of perfect self-control and of unflinching courage—"Dare to be a Daniel" has become a proverb—and of sublime faith in God and tranquil trust in his overruling care. Then there are the great lessons: "that God presides over the history of the world; that the Gentile nations as well as the Jews have always been under his control; that the succession of human empires is ordained by him: that he permits the pride and the fury of oppressors for a time, but humbles them in the end, and saves his own; that his kingdom will come at length, and will endure forever; that faithfulness and constancy to him lead to a life beyond death, and to an eternal reward."

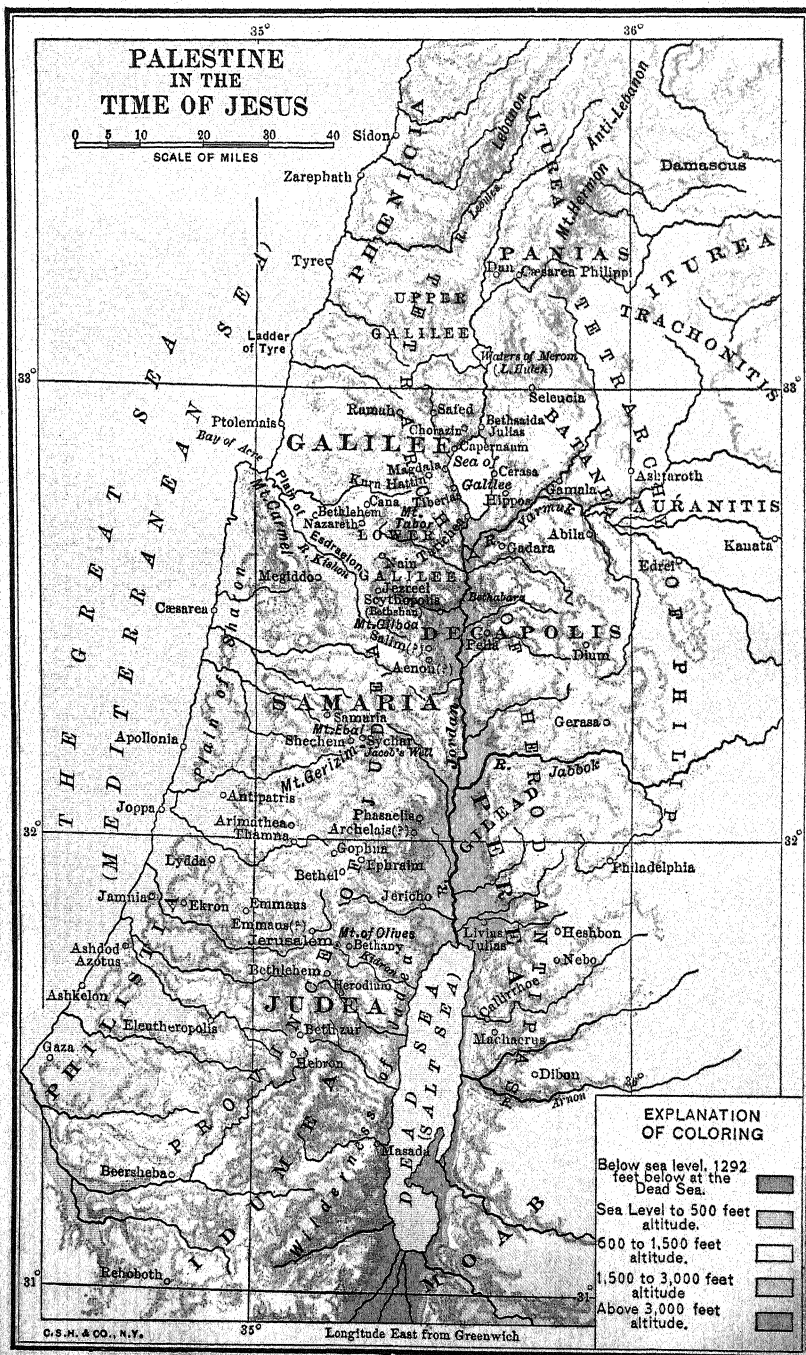
THE BOOK OF PSALMS

For an account of the Book of Psalms see pages 49-54 of *The 1915 Guide*.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS IN THE COURSE

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| B.C. | Kings of Judah |
| 782-737 | Uzziah
Public Ministry of the Prophet Amos, 760-750.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Hosea, 750-737.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Isaiah, 740-700. |
| 737-735 | Jotham
(Co-regent with Uzziah, 751-737.) |
| 735-725 | Ahaz |
| 725-686 | Hezekiah
Fall of Samaria and End of the Kingdom of Israel, 722.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Micah, 724. |
| 686-641 | Manasseh. |
| 641-639 | Ammon. |
| 639-608 | Josiah.
Josiah's Reformation, 621.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Zephaniah, 627.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Jeremiah, 626-586.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Nahum, 610-608. |
| 608 | Jehoahaz. |
| 608-597 | Jehoiakim.
Battle of Megiddo, 608.
Battle of Carchemish, 605.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Habakkuk, 605-600. |
| 597 | Jehoiakin.
First Babylonian Captivity, 597.
The Prophet Ezekiel among the Exiles. |
| 597-586 | Zedekiah.
Public Ministry of the Prophet Ezekiel, 592-570.
Destruction of Jerusalem and Babylonian Exile, 586. |

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|-------------|--|
| B.C. | Important Dates After the Exile |
| 538 | Decree of Cyrus Permitting the Return of the Exiles. |
| | Zerubbabel Governor of Judah. |
| 536 | Foundation of the Temple Laid. |
| 520 | Building of Temple Resumed. |
| 520-516 | Public Ministry of Haggai and Zechariah. |
| 516 | Temple Completed. |
| 460-440 | Public Ministry of Malachi. |
| 458 | Return of Second Group of Exiles under Ezra. |
| 445 | Nehemiah Governor of Judah.
Walls of Jerusalem Rebuilt. |
| 432 | Second Visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem. |



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FIRST QUARTER

LESSON I—JANUARY 7

JESUS THE LIFE AND LIGHT OF MEN

Golden Text

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. John 1:4

LESSON John 1:1-18 MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. 6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness to the light. 9 There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came into his own, and they that were his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. 15 John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me. 16 For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Relation of the Word to God and to the World, 1-5.
 1. The Eternal Word, 1-2.
 2. The Creator, 3.
 3. The Source of Light and Life, 4-5.
- II. The Word Contrasted with a Word, 6-9.
 1. John the Baptist a Word of God, Witnessing to the Light, 6-8.
 2. The Word the True Light, 9.
- III. The Reception of the Word, 10-13.
 1. Rejected, 10-11.
 2. Accepted, 12-13.
- IV. The Manifestation of the Word, 14-18.
 1. The Incarnation, 14.
 2. John the Baptist's Witness, 15.
 3. John the Apostle's Witness, 16, 17.
 4. The Eternal Word is One with Jesus Christ, the Revelation of the Father, 18.

1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* "Hear how John thunders!" exclaimed Chrysostom, and an ancient commentator (Bengel) adds, "This is the thunder brought down to us by the son of thunder!"—*In the beginning.* Before the creation of the world, before time began. Compare Gen. 1:1 and Matthew Henry's observation that "the world was *from* the beginning, but the Word was *in* the beginning."—*The Word.* The Greek λόγος, *logos*, word, is seen in

our terms *theology, geology, biology, chronology, etc.* *Logos, Word*, was a familiar and significant term both in Jewish and Gentile thought. It meant the *Eternal God in relation to Man*, the self-communicating God. John uses the term to designate Jesus Christ as expressing and revealing God to the world. "As your word is yourself uttered, so Christ is God uttered. Christ is not a word, you observe, but *the Word*. Every prophet was a word of God. Every great or good man since the world began, who has added anything to the general fund of virtue or of truth, has been a word of God. Galileo was God's word to science: Luther was God's word to religion. But Christ was *The Word*—the full and complete thought of God—uttered once and for all, expressing the very soul of God with such entire precision and finality, that of him it may be said, 'The Word was with God and the Word was God'" (W. J. Dawson).—*The Word was with God*. Literally, "was directed toward God," was in intimate relationship with God.—*The Word was God*. In him God dwelt. Compare Rev. i.8.

2. *The same*. The Word. This verse is a continuation of the first two clauses of the first verse, repeated here to emphasize the fact that he who afterwards dwelt among men was in the very beginning with God.

3. *All things were made through him*. "Christ is the Word; and the intention which dwelt in the mind of God from all eternity was that this great Word should be spoken and this expression of the Divine life should be made; and all the activities of creation, all the processes through which the world came to be what it is, looked on to, were only the preface to, that utterance of the Christ-Word; 'for all things were made through him'—made with a view to his coming and his earthly day. That was what God held ever-present: 'the same was in the beginning with God'" (Clark).—*And without him . . . made*. The assertion of a fact by means of both positive and negative statements is characteristic of the Gospel of John.

4. *In him was life; and the life was the light of men*. He is the source of life, whence the life of men is derived, and his life is the source of light, whence comes men's power to discern the truth. Compare Ps. 36.9: "For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light."

5. *The darkness apprehended it not*. Those whose minds were darkened by sin did not lay hold of, understand, the Word. John often marvels that others could not see the truth which was so clear to him: see 3.19; 12.37. The reading given in the margin of the Revised Version (RVm) is *overcame it not*; this translation means that the darkness did not eclipse the light. "I shall have to tell (so we may paraphrase it) how the dark passions of the human heart stirred themselves in resistance to this light and this life—how man, who should have taken life from this Christ, refused to live.' And yet, though it be a story of conflict, it will be a story, too, leading to a triumphant end. It was the light which triumphed after all, although it had to struggle against the darkness of the world. There will be opposition to tell of, and awful bitterness of hatred which set up a cross at last; but then a Resurrection at the end. 'The darkness overcame it not.' So, as he plunges into the story which has the gloom of conflict upon it, does John look through as it were to the tunnel's farther end, and feel sure that he will come out into the blaze of day when his journey is done" (Clark).

6. *There came a man*. The Greek verb means *came into existence*. "Suddenly now, as if on these heights the air was becoming too keen and rare, John drops down to speak of things from the standpoint of man" (Clark).—*Sent from God*. The Greek verb ἀποσταλμένος, *apostalmenos*, means *sent on some mission*, and is the verb whence comes our word *apostle*.—*Whose name was John*. The writer of this Gospel saw no need of adding "the Baptist," for he never mentions himself by name.

7. *Came for witness*. "*Witness* means that you know something; that you tell what you know; and that you tell it most with your life. And telling it with your life means, not only by the way you live, but, too, even though the telling of it may cost you your life. It came to mean all that with this witness" (S. D. Gordon).

8. *He was not the light*. There were followers of the Baptist who claimed that he was the Messiah; on his third missionary journey, Paul had found at Ephesus such disciples, Acts 19.1-6.

9. *There was the true light.* Jesus the Christ.—Which lighteth every man, coming into the world. In this translation, the word *coming* belongs with *light*, not with *every man* as in the AV. "There was the Light, the true Light which lighteth every man; that Light was, and yet more, that Light was coming into the world. From the first, he was on his way to the world, advancing towards the Incarnation by preparatory revelations" (Westcott).

11. *He came unto his own.* The Greek *ra idia* is neuter, and means *his own things*, his own country, the land of Israel. In the next clause, *oi idioi*, his own, is masculine, and means *his own people*, the Jews.—*Received.* Believed.

12. *They that believe on his name.* His own people as a whole rejected him, but there were individuals who received him, accepted him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

13. In this verse there is a threefold denial of any human agency in the spiritual birth of the children of God, and one affirmation of the Divine agency. See John 3-5, 6.

14. *And the Word became flesh.* Jesus the Christ became man. John begins where the other evangelists end. See ¶ 1, p. 25.—*Dwelt*, Greek, *tabernacled*. As in Old Testament times the tabernacle was the dwelling-place of God, so in New Testament times the Person of Christ was his tabernacle. Recall Lord Kelvin's confession that the greatest discovery of his life was the discovery of God in Christ.—*We beheld.* John the Apostle and the other disciples beheld. Is John thinking of the Transfiguration?—*His glory . . . full of grace and truth.* Verse 1 declares Christ's perfect Divinity; verse 14, his perfect humanity. "May he who was full of grace and truth impress his character on mine. Grace—eagerness to show favor; truth—truthfulness, sincerity, honor, for his mercy's sake" (Livingstone's diary, quoted by Jane Stoddart).

15. Another parenthetical remark about John the Baptist's mission.—*He that cometh after me.* Whose work is later than mine.—*Is become before me.* Is superior to me.—*For he was before me.* Greek, *first in regard of me.* RVm. See Jn. 1.32-34. (Throughout this book RV is used for Revised Version, AV for Authorized Version, and RVm for margin of Revised Version.)

16. *We.* Verses 16-18 are not the words of John the Baptist, but complete the preface of John's Gospel: *we* refers to the disciples of Christ.—*Of his fulness we all received.* "Fullness here means (1) the fulness of the Divine attributes which dwelt in Christ (Eph. 1.23; Col. 1.19; 2.9), and (2) the fulness of the human virtues which he displayed. Both these 'fulnesses' Christ imparts in some measure to true believers, as the evangelist testifies from personal experience." "There's another translation of this sentence that I have run across several times. It reads in this way: 'Of his *skimpiness* have we all received.' I never found that in common print; only in the larger print of men's lives. But in that printing it seems to have run into a large edition, with very wide circulation. And as if John has a suspicion about possible bad translations, he did a bit of underscoring. That word *fulness* is underscored in John's original copy, in three added words: 'Grace for grace.' That is, *grace in place of grace.* Some grace has been received. And it is so wondrous that nothing seems so good. Then comes in a sudden, soft, intruding of a flood of grace so great that it seems to displace all that was there. And then this sort of thing becomes a habit, God's habit of responding to your need of every sort" (S. D. Gordon).—*Grace for grace.* *Grace upon grace*, RVm.

18. *The only begotten Son . . . hath declared him.* Compare Jn. 14.9: he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and Jn. 5.37; 6.46; Col. 1.15; 1 Tim. 6.16; 1 Jn. 4.12, 20.—*Who is in the bosom of the Father.* The Word was with God, verse 1.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The Word.* The Hebrew-speaking Jews were familiar with the idea that God revealed himself to the world through his *Memra*, a Word, which they distinguished from himself as his organ of revelation. The Targums (the Aramaic translations, or paraphrases, of the Hebrew Old Testament) speak, not of Jehovah, but of the *Memra* of Jehovah, as being manifested to Abraham, Hagar, Isaac, Jacob, and to Moses at the bush. St. John's

preface, therefore, proclaimed to the Hebrews, "That *Memra* of Jehovah, which appeared to the patriarchs and prophets, was no other than Christ before his incarnation."

The educated Greek-speaking Jews (Hellenists) were familiar with the writings of the Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria (about 15 B.C.-50 A.D.). He believed that God does not act upon the world directly, but mediately through his Logos or Reason. To the Hellenist, therefore, St. John's Gospel said, "That Logos, through which you say God acts upon the world and reveals himself in it, is no other than Christ."

Educated heathen also believed in a Divine Logos or Reason, diffused through the world, and disposing all things in a rational order. First Heraclitus, then Plato, and finally the Stoics developed this doctrine, until, in the apostolic age, it was the explanation of the universe commonly accepted by educated persons. To the heathen therefore, St. John's preface said, "That Divine Logos, which inspired your philosophers as far as they have spoken truly, and whose existence is admitted by all educated men, has finally manifested himself in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Read the account that follows of his wonderful life and sayings, and you will acknowledge that this is true."

St. John's doctrine of the Logos differs from the Jewish and the heathen doctrines mainly in these two points: (1) That the Logos is personal, and (2) that he became flesh.—One Volume Commentary.

8. *He was not the light.* Just as oriental people call the early dawn "the false dawn," because many mistake it for daylight, so John the Baptist might be called the false light, because many mistook him for the promised Messiah.

9. *There was the true light.* From early Christian times, great quantities of lamps, running into hundreds, have been found in the recent excavations of ancient Gezer, and some of them are inscribed with such inscriptions as "The Lord is my Light." It would seem that from the early belief that the spirit required food and drink—and weapons, too, for they have been found in great numbers—gradually developed the thought that light was more needed in the dark underworld, and this in

early Christian ages led to the lamp, symbolizing, in the darkness of the tomb, him who is the "Light of the World." It is interesting, too, to notice how these customs survive in the Orient to-day, where lamps and candles are kept burning around the corpse among both Christians and Jews, and are burnt for many days after the burial in the death chambers.—E. W. G. Masterman, in "Biblical World."



Holbein's Representation of John The Apostle

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What period of time is covered by the history of the Acts? Where did the followers of Christ first bear witness to him? What led them to go beyond Jerusalem and Judea? How far had the good news concerning the Christ been carried when the Acts closes? Who were the leaders in preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth?

The Gospel of John and the Book of the Acts. The history of the Acts, which has been our study during all the year just ended, succeeded that of the Gospel of John, but John's Gospel was not written until about

twenty-five years after Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, had ended his missionary activity and had gained his crown of life. The great churches which Paul had founded in Asia Minor had prospered and were beginning to decline. Jerusalem had long since been destroyed by the armies of Titus and the people of Judea had been carried into captivity. All the books of the Bible, it is believed, had been written, save this fourth Gospel. John was living at Ephesus, awaiting his summons to follow his Master to the world invisible. Our first three Gospels had been written, and their story told wherever the Greek language was spoken. John felt impelled to write a fourth account of the life of his Lord. Who could tell it better than the disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple the nearest akin to his Lord in spirit?

The Gospel according to John. See pages 24-29 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Let us get a clear idea of the situation and the size of the country which was the home of Jesus Christ throughout his earthly life. At the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea lies Syria. The southern part of Syria is Palestine. Palestine is limited on the north by the mountains of Lebanon, on the east and south by the desert, and on the west by the Mediterranean, or Great Sea, as it was formerly called.

The word *Palestine* is used both for Western Palestine, the part west of the Jordan River, and for Palestine proper, which includes also a section east of the Jordan. Western Palestine may be compared with New Jersey in area. New Jersey has 7455 square miles, and Palestine 6400 square miles. The area of Palestine proper is somewhat indefinite, but it is generally given as nearly 12,000 square miles, or about the size of the State of Maryland.

"From Dan to Beersheba," usually considered the length of the country, is one hundred and forty miles. The greatest length of Western Palestine is one hundred and sixty miles, and its average width is forty miles. It is, as you see, a very small country, for its length could be crossed by rail in less than six hours, and its breadth in less than two hours. From its highest mountain peaks a glimpse can be had of almost the entire country. After Jesus was brought back in infancy from Egypt, his entire life was spent within this small territory. We have no record of any journey farther north than Cæsarea Philippi, south than Bethlehem, east than Bethany beyond the Jordan, and west than the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Assign pages 1-3 of "In the Master's Country." See p. 55.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

About three thoughts the Prologue of John's Gospel clusters: the nature of the Word; the Word rejected; and the Word received. These are the three great thoughts of the Gospel itself, for it is a history of the revelation of Christ, of the unbelief of the Jewish people as a whole, and of the faith of the disciples. The Deity of Jesus is the outstanding message of John's Gospel. It was written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name, Jn. 20.31. To lead your pupils to believe that Jesus is more than a man, more than the greatest of the great teachers of the world, more than a great example, more than a prophet of God; to lead them to believe that he is Divine, that he became flesh and dwelt among men to reveal God to men and lead them to become children of God—this is your opportunity in the first two quarters of this year.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. How do I let you know about what I am thinking? Yes, by my words. What is a word? What do words do? Words reveal to others what the speaker thinks and feels—his mind and heart are revealed through his speech. Can we see God? "No man hath seen God at any time," the last verse of our lesson declares, but then it tells us how God has revealed himself to us: how? Jesus, the Son of God, has revealed his Father, and so John calls Jesus the Word. Jesus revealed God not only by what he said while here on earth, but also by what he did and by what he was. John tell us in this introduction to his Gospel

that Jesus was both God and man, both Divine and human. What does the fourteenth verse tell us about him? (Do not attempt to explain to young pupils John's use of the term "the Word" in the earlier verses of the first chapter.)

For Older Pupils. Matthew begins his Gospel with a list of the ancestors of Jesus, and then tells us about his birth at Bethlehem, about the inn and the wise men. Mark begins with the preaching of John the Baptist, and shows us Jesus as a man, coming to John to be baptized. Luke tells us about the birth of Jesus being foretold, and then gives his account of the shepherds and the angels, the manger and the Christ-child. With what words does John begin his Gospel? See further ¶ 5, p. 24.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE INCARNATE WORD

The Meaning of the Word Incarnation. In old-fashioned flower gardens clusters of pinks are always found. And in florists' windows one sees flowers of several colors which are descendants of those pinks. We call the florists' products carnations. Do you know what the word *carnation* means? It comes from a Latin word meaning *flesh*. Carnation means flesh-colored. The old-fashioned pinks are flesh-colored, the beautiful pink color of a little child's flesh.

Dr. F. W. Farrar suggests in one of his books that the name *Carnation* might help you to remember the long word *Incarnation*. "Take off the 'in' and you have left 'carnation,' the name of this flower. Put 'in' back again and you have 'Incarnation.' What does this long word mean? Carnation, you know, means flesh, and Incarnation, then, means *in the flesh*. The Incarnation of Christ means his life here on earth in the flesh: that is, in the body. "The Word was made flesh." "Word" is one of the names the Bible uses for Christ. Christ came down from heaven and lived in a flesh body like yours. He came as a little child, with beautiful pink cheeks. 'Carnation,' a flesh-colored flower; 'Incarnation,' the beautiful flesh-color, or body, in which Christ lived while on earth."

A Helpful Analogy. When Mr. Webster was asked if he comprehended Christ's Divinity and humanity, he replied: "No sir, I can not; and I should be ashamed to acknowledge him as my Savior if I could. If I could comprehend him, he could be no greater than myself, and I need a superhuman Savior."

While no one can ever comprehend how Christ could be both God and Man, yet there are faint analogies in human lives which suggest helpful thoughts. One of the best is given by a recent writer from the life of Lewis Carroll, a man more famous for a delightful book written for children, "Alice in Wonderland," than for his learned treatise on the "Differential Calculus."

Those who knew Professor Carroll as a distinguished mathematician, a lecturer on its higher branches at Oxford, could not at first believe that he was the author of that most imaginative of all imaginative stories for children. How could one man be so thoroughly at home in two such opposite worlds of thought? It is impossible, they said. And yet it was true, and if a human being who was at home in the abstruse world of knowledge could so incarnate himself, as it were, in child life, must we not readily believe that God, to whom all things are possible, could incarnate himself, and become in one Person both perfect Deity and perfect Humanity?

An Event with which no Other can Compare. Whatever our growing wisdom learns that is marvelous about the past history of our planet, of the tremendous forces that have been at work upon its structures, and the strange, splendid deeds that men have done upon its surface, this one event in its long life—that God came here, that Divine feet trod upon its ground, and a Divine voice spoke with its breath—must forever stand out bright and high above everything. Just as in an old nobleman's palace, where all kinds of life have flowed along for centuries, where men and women have lived and loved and worked, been born, married and died, where splendid deeds have been done and splendid lives been lived, there still shines out above all others one day, centuries ago, when a king

was its guest; so in the world's history there can be no time to compare with that in which Divinity came here. The whole world that knows about the coming dates its whole life from it. Such is the splendor and importance of the *advent* of Jesus Christ.—Phillips Brooks, in "Sermons for the Church Year."

II THE SON THE INTERPRETER OF THE FATHER

Why the Word Became Flesh. Great thinkers like Doctor Arnold and Charles Kingsley have confessed that they could only comprehend God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Henry Ward Beecher said that when he tried to think of God without thinking of Christ there went up in his mind "a vague mental mist." It was to clear away such a mist and show us how we may realize the fact and the power of God that the Word became flesh and tabernacled among men.

Guido Reni's painting of the "Aurora" frescoed on the ceiling of the Vatican at Rome and the mirror on the table underneath, into which one may look without effort and study there the wonderful fresco, are familiar to all. So Jesus mirrored the Father for all the world to see. "In this life," writes the Editor of the "Sunday School Chronicle," "we can go no farther than the child who asked if it were possible for him to see God and who replied, when told he could not, 'Then I shall be satisfied with Jesus Christ.' We must all be satisfied with Christ, who is the highest expression of God known to man. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'"

God Unveiled Himself in Jesus Christ. The plot in one of Myrtle Reed's stories turns about a veil which the heroine wore over her supposedly scorched features. Nobody had ever doubted that the veil concealed ugliness, any more than the average men doubt the rank power of the Almighty. The lover of long ago, taking for granted the terrible aspect of his injured fiancée, repudiated her before she left the hospital. Nobody ever questioned the reality of the scar, nobody except the pedler who, from away in the woods, used to "call her," as he said, with his pipe. He kept begging for a sight of her face. "Spinner in the sun," he would say, "I know that you are very beautiful." And the best of it is that the pedler was right. For when at length she removed her veil to meet his ardent eyes, she was, in fact, surpassingly beautiful.

May I reverently apply this story to the unveiling of God in Jesus Christ? To the world-old longing for a sight of his face, to the lover-like insistence that his face must be unspeakably beautiful, God unveiled himself in Jesus Christ. And the world is still palpitant with the surpassing glory of the vision.—Dr. George Clarke Peck, in "The Method of the Master."

Jesus Christ Lighted up God. What did he not light up? His amazing rays streamed down the darkest ways of men, and illumined the vast, somber chambers of human circumstances. He lighted up sin and showed its true color. He lighted up sorrow, and transfigured it! He lighted up duty and gave it a new face. He lighted up common work, and glorified it. He lighted up death, and we could see through it! But, above all, he lighted up God, and "the people that sat in darkness saw a great light."—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "My Daily Meditation."

III CHILDREN OF GOD

The Reason for the Incarnation. God has made it possible for men to become partakers of the Divine Nature, because Jesus left the heavenly world, with all its glories, and condescended to come here to this world, with all its sin and shame. It was for this he consented to come. It was for this he lived a period of over thirty years in this world. It was for this he was born in a stable. It was for this he lived that matchless life here. He lived and prayed for this. It was for this he agonized in the garden, shedding great drops of blood. It was for this he went to Calvary, where he was crowned with thorns, and where he was cruelly put to death, being spat upon and scourged, dying for everyone that you and I might be saved, that you and I might become partakers of the Divine Nature. It was for this that he rose again from the dead, for this he ascended to the right hand of God, and is coming again, and for this he sent the Holy Spirit, who alone today can make effective his word,

convert men and women, make them regenerate, instil the love of God in their hearts. It was for this the Holy Spirit was given, that you and I might become partakers of the Divine Nature—Christ becoming a partaker of our human nature in order that we might become partakers of his Divine Nature.—From a Sermon by Dr. P. S. Campbell.

Power to Become Children of God. If you receive Christ, you shall be a son of God. "Ah, but," you say, a little puzzled, "I always *have been* God's child. I was made so. I always have been so." Have you, my dear friend? Were you indeed God's child in those unchildlike hours and years when you went your own proud way without humility and without a prayer? Were you God's child when you forgot your Father and lived as if your own will were your only law? Were you God's child then? "Yes," you say. "Rebellious as I was, rebellious as I am, I am God's child still. Nothing can disinherit me. He is my Father." And you are right. The privileges of your creation, the possibilities of your relation to Divinity, nothing has destroyed. But oh, my friend, if some one were to come and bring that Father to you with such convincing evidence of his love that all your indifference and rebellion should go down, and you should find yourself thoroughly at your Father's feet, claiming your long-neglected sonship, calling him "Father" and begging him to take and rule and lift your life—tell me, would it not be right and just to say of him who did this for you that he gave you power to become a son of God? Would you not say of him that he gave you back your Father? This is what the Redeemer does. He takes the native capacity and trains it into a live and active fact. He rebuilds the broken bridge. So he is our great Pontifex, our great High Priest, bringing God and man together; once more opening a channel through which the hindered and impatient love of God may flow, and once more opening the powers in man that can respond to that love; so reconstructing the family in heaven and earth; giving back the Father to the children and the children to the Father; making God man's Father, giving man the power to become the son of God.—Phillips Brooks, in "Sermons for the Church Year."

A Child of the King! Do you know the story of Cyrus the Great and what happened to him when he was a baby? They say that his grandfather was jealous of him. Whoever heard of such a thing?—a grandfather jealous of a baby, and his own grandchild, too! But the grandfather was king of the great nation of Persia, and he wanted to keep the throne for himself. (He must have forgotten that he must die some day.) And so he was jealous even of the baby, for fear he would take the throne when he became a man.

He called a servant one day and told him he wanted the child killed. But servants are sometimes kinder than kings. Instead of killing the boy, the good man took him to a distant province and gave him to a shepherd who had no child. The lad grew up supposing that the shepherd was really his father. They taught him to tend the sheep, and he grew up expecting to be always a shepherd. Of course he couldn't think anything else. But one day he learned who he was; that his father had been a prince, and that the throne would some day be his. After that there was no more shepherding for him! He began to fit himself to rule as a king. That is how he became Cyrus the Great, the King of Persia. He found out whose child he was.

Do you know that you are God's child, and that he has a place for you in his kingdom? Then you will begin to live as a prince should live; you will try to be worthy of your great Father and to fit yourself to reign with him. When we forget whose children we are, we stoop to things unworthy of us. The thought of our Father and the kingdom that waits us will help us each day to "walk worthy of God." A child of God ought to be too proud to sin!—Frank T. Bayley, in "The Congregationalist."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. The homage that we render thee
Is still our Father's own;
Nor jealous claim nor rivalry
Divide the Cross and Throne.—Whittier.

Verse 1. I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it.—Browning.

Verse 14. Every devout soul is a word—a look—from the all-loving One.—Jean Paul Richter.

Verse 17. The law and the gospel are two keys. The law is the key that shutteth up men under condemnation; the gospel is the key which opens the door and lets them out.—William Tyndale.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Jesus comes to his own today; are we, who are of that number, receiving him? The year 1917 is just beginning. It can not be a happy year unless we receive Jesus as our Redeemer and seek to make our thoughts and deeds pleasing unto him. Reverently we would offer the prayer of Frances Ridley Havergal:

Another year of service, of witness for thy love,
Another year of training for holier work above.
Another year is dawning; dear Master, let it be
On earth, or else in heaven, another year for thee!

Every one should live in the light of the Light of the World and know all the privileges and duties of children of God. As the Son of God was the Word of God, so we, as children of God, should be words of God to others.

Jesus Christ revealed the Father. In all our lessons for the coming six months let us heed how he interprets for us the Father's will.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The author of the Gospel of John. See pp. 25 and 26 of our Introduction.

2. The object of the Prologue to John's Gospel is to show the unity of Jesus with God. See the second chapter of S. D. Gordon's "Quiet Talks on John's Gospel"; pages 306-312 of Dr. John Kelman's "Ephemerata Eternitatis"; Chapter II of Clark's "The Christ from Without and Within."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look up. 1. Where did John prepare for his life work? (Lk. 1.80.) 2. How was he dressed and what was his food in the wilderness? (Mt. 3.4.) 3. What was his message? (Lk. 3.7-14.) 4. What effect did his preaching have? (Gospels, and *Guide*, p. 54.) 5. How did the people regard him? (Lk. 3.15.) 6. How did John regard himself? 7. Where was Bethany beyond the Jordan? (*Guide*, p. 55.) 8. Who were the priests and Levites? (*Guide*, p. 52.) 9. Why did they ask John if he were Elijah? (*Guide*, p. 52.) 10. Who were the Pharisees? (*Guide*, p. 53.) 11. Where in the book of Isaiah is the quotation of verse 23 found? (See margin of your Bible.) 12. What was the "latchet"? 13. From all the Gospels gather all that John the Baptist said about Jesus and that Jesus said about him. (See the Subject Index of your Bible.) 14. What is said in John 3.22-36; 5.32-38; and 10.41 about the testimony of the Baptist? 15. Tell the story of the baptism of Jesus given in the earlier Gospels. 16. Tell the story of the temptation.

Questions to Think About. 1. What does it mean to bear witness? 2. What did John mean by saying that he was unworthy to unloose the latchet of Jesus' shoes? 3. In what sense did John not know Jesus? (*Guide*, p. 53.) 4. To what scene does he allude in verse 32? 5. Of what was the descending dove an emblem? 6. What is the significance of John's expression "The Lamb of God"? 7. Why was Jesus baptized of John? 8. Why are people baptized today? 9. What qualities do you admire in the Baptist?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the Prologue of John's Gospel. Also John 1.29—the words, and the fact that they are found in John 1.29.

See the suggestions on page 22 of our Introduction about pupils' note-books. This week Juniors and Intermediates may write "I. The Witness of John the Apostle to Jesus as the Life and Light of Men." Seniors may write "I. The Prologue."

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

Golden Text

Behold, the lamb of God, that taketh away
the sin of the world! John 1.29.

LESSON John 1.19-34; verses 19, 23-34 printed MEMORIZE verses 32, 33

19 And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou? 23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet. 24 And they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet? 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize in water: in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, 27 *even* he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. 32 And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. 34 And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Christ Announced, 19-28.
 1. Who the Witness-Bearer Was, 19-24.
 2. His Announcement of the Christ, 25-28.
- II. The Christ Revealed, 29-34.
 1. The Lamb of God, 29-31.
 2. The Son of God, 32-34.

19. *And this.* That which follows.—*John.* John the Baptist.—*The Jews.* The members of the Sanhedrin.—*Priests and Levites.* They were the religious leaders: the priests offered sacrifices and burnt incense in the Temple, and the Levites were their assistants in the services.—*To ask him, Who art thou?* The Sanhedrin passed judgment on false prophets, and they claimed a right to have John's work investigated.

21. *Art thou Elijah?* The great prophet in the time of Ahab. The Jews believed that before the coming of the Christ Elijah the prophet would reappear on earth to herald his approach. The sign that the Christ was at hand would be the reincarnation of Elijah. See Mal. 4.5; Mt. 11.14; 17.10.—*And he saith, I am not.* What the Baptist would not claim for himself, that his mission was what the Jews expected of Elijah, Jesus later claimed for him: as the disciples were coming down the mountain after the Transfiguration their minds recalled this general belief about Elijah and they asked, "How is it that the Scribes say that Elijah must first come?" and Jesus made reply, "Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would."—*The prophet.* The one announced by Moses, Dt. 18.15, 18.

23. *He said.* After answering in the negative the questions hurled at him by the committee of investigation (verses 20-22), he now answers their question "Who art thou?"—*I am the voice.* John was the voice; Jesus was the Word.—*Make straight the way of the Lord.* Everything which would hinder the Lord's coming into men's hearts must be removed. "The ways and paths of the Lord are men's souls, which must be cleared of the thorns of passion and the stones of sin, and thus made straight and level for his approach," explains a Greek monk of the twelfth century.

But just as valleys must be filled in as well as hills cut away to make a level highway, so good deeds must be done as well as evil deeds avoided, in order to open that highway for the King of Kings. "Every duty carried out, every righteous deed wrought, every kindness shown, every day rightly lived, improves the Royal Highway."—*As said Isaiah the prophet.* See Isa. 40.3, where the prophet is referring to the preparation for the return of the exiled Jews from Babylon: John declares that the words describe his mission.

24. *They.* The priests and Levites who formed the deputation, verse 19.—*From the Pharisees.* They were the orthodox religious party among the Jews, learned in the law and traditions, scrupulous in keeping them, and full of self-righteous pride.

25. *Why then baptizest thou?* See below. Had he been the Messiah, this inauguration of the rite for the Jews had been admissible in their eyes, it seems.

26. *John answered saying.* John's answer is not a direct answer to their question; but he tells them by whose authority he baptizes. "He who is my authority already stands among you; what I do is small indeed compared with what he shall do," he tells them. See Lk. 3.16, 17.

27. *He that cometh after me.* In the Talmud the Christ is spoken of as *Habba, the Coming One.*—*Latchet.* The thong which bound the sandal or shoe to the foot.

28. *Bethany beyond the Jordan.* The alternate reading given in the margin is Bethabarah. As Bethany means "Boathouse" and Bethabarah means "Ferry-boat," it is probable that the place was called by both names.

29. *On the morrow he seeth Jesus.* Jesus had probably just returned from the wilderness where he had been tempted.—*The Lamb of God.* The sacrifice provided by God: see Isa. 53.7.—*Take away the sin.* Or, *beareth the sin*, RVm. See 1 Jn. 2.2; 3.5; 4.10.—*Of the world.* Characteristic of John's Gospel is the proclamation that Jesus is the universal Christ, not the Christ of the Jews only.

30. Compare verse 15.

31. *And I knew him not.* Jesus and John were kinsmen, and though John had lived in the hill country of Hebron and Jesus had lived in Nazareth, John must have known him as a Boy or Man, but he did not know him as the Messiah until this was revealed to him by God. He disclaims, not personal knowledge of Jesus, but full and complete knowledge of him as the Messiah. How this knowledge came to him is explained in the next verse.—*That he should be made manifest to Israel.* John's ministry was limited to the Israelites.

32-33. See Mt. 3.16, 17.—*I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove . . . upon him.* What does the expression signify? "Was it not that henceforth Jesus was endued with all the power of the Holy Spirit—power to know the truth fully—power to declare it perfectly—power to control nature and to destroy the works of the devil—power to reach and save the souls of men" (Robson)? This is the Evangelist's only allusion to the baptism of Jesus. He deems it a fact so well known that he does not need to repeat it here. See Mt. 3.13-17; Mk. 1.9-11; Lk. 3.21, 22.

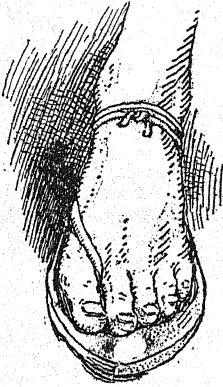
34. *I have borne witness.* Now and earlier.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *Make straight the way of the Lord, as saith Isaiah the prophet.* The thought of Isaiah is that Jehovah is returning at the head of the Hebrew exiles from Babylon, and the way must be made ready for him. Roads in the East were originally built by the King's order, and they were repaired whenever the king was to ride over them.

25. *Why then baptizest thou?* John's baptism was not a new rite at this time, for it was required of a pagan who would become a Jew, in token that his sins and superstitions had been washed away, that he was no longer a pagan, but a Jewish proselyte. John made a new use of the rite, declaring it necessary for the Jews themselves to be cleansed from sin. Dr. Abbott has aptly shown the peculiarity of John's use of the rite by saying that it was as if, in our own time, a civic reformer, denouncing the corruptions of the people, should call on native Americans to take out naturalization papers and so renew their vows of loyalty to their country.

27. *The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose.* Jesus, like other orientals, wore sandals which were merely leather soles fastened to the feet by means of leather thongs. On entering a house these sandals were taken off and the feet dusted by a servant. So menial was this service held to be that the rabbis said, "Every service which a servant will perform for his master, a disciple will do for his rabbi, except loosing his sandal thong." Similar sandals are worn at the present time by inhabitants of the remote villages of Syria and the peasants of Greece, Italy, and Spain.



Modern Arab Sandal

29. *The Lamb of God.* "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9.22), is a statement of a universal belief, and the blood of the sacrificial lamb was a familiar and an indispensable feature in the Jewish ritual as an annual and daily sacrifice (Ex. 12.3, 29), and even now in Jerusalem, Constantinople, Athens, Petrograd, and Tokio, the Christian Orthodox priest every day takes a flat, circular loaf of bread, with a peculiar stamp imprinted on it, and, accompanied by an elaborate ritual, places it upon the altar, saying, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." He then "slays" the loaf with the sacred knife, and thousands believe with him that he slays the Lamb of God.—Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie, in "Sunday School Times."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What is said in the preface to John's Gospel about John the Baptist and his witnessing? What words of John in regard to the superiority and priority of Jesus are there given? How many titles were given Jesus in our last lesson? Which one do you like the best? Why? What did we learn last year about the first great baptism of the Christians with the Holy Spirit?

John the Baptist and the Jews. The closing words of Malachi predicted the coming of the Day of the Lord and of Elijah. Four centuries passed, and Elijah came in the person of John the Baptist, the herald of the Day of the Lord. Belonging to the proud and aristocratic priestly line, John had abundant opportunity of becoming well acquainted with the Pharisees' faults of formalism and with the hopes and fears of his nation. At what age he withdrew to the barren Judean hills overlooking the Dead Sea, we know not, but there he spent some time in solitude, till he felt impelled by Divine leading to come forth and sound his trumpet calls of warning to his people. And the trumpet blast of his voice shook the land.

All Palestine at this time was in great excitement over the expected coming of the Messiah. Rumor was rife about John. All the people held him for a prophet, and many of them evidently jumped to the conclusion that he was the Messiah. "They were wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement by his words and seemed ready to do anything that he might advise," Josephus relates, and adds that it was the fear that John might use his influence to put himself at the head of a rebellion which induced Herod to consent to his death. The rulers at Jerusalem, as well as Herod Antipas, feared him, and sent their deputation to inquire into his work and authority. For an account of his preaching read Mt. 3.1-12; Mk. 1.1-8; Lk. 3.1-20.

The Character and Work of John the Baptist. He was a great personality. Jesus described him as the greatest man born of woman. Rodin's statue in the Luxemburg represents him with tremendous legs and feet; in this way the sculptor has sought to portray the great "going-beforeness" of the prophet. Could any one imagine him a man of small, weak limbs? Rugged strength of physique as well as of character must have been his.

Some one has aptly said that the common newspaper term, "an assignment," describes John's life work. He was "a man sent," forgetful of self, completely engrossed in the work of carrying out the assignment of God. His austere life in the desert, his marvelous faith in Jesus as the Son of God, his self-abnegation in a pre-eminently self-seeking age, his

fearless, uncompromising denunciation of the evils of his time, and his tragic death, make him one of the most interesting of Bible characters.

The Order of Events. First came the ministry of John the Baptist; second, the baptism of Jesus; third, the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness; during those forty days the deputation from Jerusalem came to John; and in our record between verses 28 and 29 Jesus returned from the wilderness.

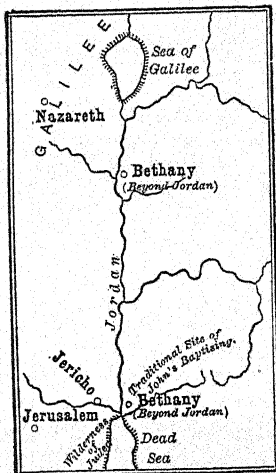
John was six months older than Jesus. He probably began preaching at the age of thirty (for a man seldom entered public life earlier), in the year 26 A.D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

John the Baptist began his preaching in "the wilderness of Judea," the district west of the Dead Sea, but he moved northward into the Jordan Valley and baptized in the River Jordan. *Bethany beyond the Jordan* was so called, no doubt, to distinguish it from the better-known Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Its location is not definitely known. The traditional site is nearly opposite Jericho, where there is a heap of ruins bearing in Arabic the name of the Monastery of St. John. Here at Easter time great multitudes come to bathe in the Jordan and carry away in bottles some of its water. Recent scholarship has located Bethany near a ford (now Abarah) about fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee.

Let one of your pupils copy this little map on the blackboard, and trace the route of Jesus from his home in Nazareth eastward to the Jordan, down the eastern side of the valley to the first Bethany beyond the Jordan. Then point out the traditional site opposite Jericho.

Teach or call for the information about the four parallel regions of Palestine, given in "In the Master's Country," paragraphs 17-19. (This is a small geography of Palestine written especially for pupils' use. It has two large, beautifully colored maps, one relief and the other political, eight large photographic reproductions by Underwood & Underwood, and many small maps and diagrams, as well as all the descriptive text essential for a comprehensive knowledge of the geography of Palestine in the time of Christ. It is published by the George H. Doran Co., and may be had of all booksellers. Price fifty cents.)



A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Two travelers passed a stone-breaker by the roadside in England, and one of them observed, "What a mean occupation!" "Perhaps not," returned the other. "He is helping make the roads over which the feet of the future will pass." Is not that answer symbolical of every teacher's work? Is he not, like John the Baptist, preparing the road for the Christ to travel, making hearts ready to receive him? Let us make the road and pray that the King will use it.

John prepared men's hearts for the Savior by telling what he knew about Jesus, by testifying that he had seen and had borne witness that he is the Son of God. Such witness bearing, such personal testimony, is the mightiest weapon that a teacher can use. It is not what others say and know but what you say and know that will most quickly influence your scholars.

"Is not our Christian teaching too often 'teaching' and nothing else?" questions an editorial in the "Sunday School Chronicle." "We speak at times as coldly of the Gospel truths as of the facts of nature in a scientific talk. And may not this account for the dryness and deadness too frequently found among us? Have we no testimony to give? Cannot we say, when we speak of Apostolic experiences, These also in some measure have been ours? Nothing stirs the heart like the life witness; but we cannot give it unless the life beats in our own souls. Far be it from us to say that a seeking soul may not teach others, and sometimes in the teaching become a finder. But the strength of the Church lies not in

seeking teachers, but in converted teachers, in witnesses who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and who have themselves come to share in the powers of an endless life. Then, indeed, we have the atmosphere and climate in which the miracles of grace are wrought. Our words become seeds of truth. Our task is a bigger one than that of instructing and educating. Redemption and not culture is our aim. Christ calls us to be witnesses as well as teachers."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In thought today we stand on the banks of the Jordan where John is baptizing. What is the Gospel which we are studying called? Were John the writer of this Fourth Gospel and John whom we call the Baptist one and the same? (Make sure that your pupils do not confound the two.) John the Baptist wore a loose garment made of coarse camel's hair, bound about his waist with a girdle of leather. Great crowds of people came to hear him preach. One day certain men from Jerusalem came to see him and ask him questions. Who were they?

For Older Pupils. Not long ago the members of the English Postal Telegraph Christian Association sent some thirty-five hundred copies of the Gospels to men holding similar positions in the postal service in India. In each volume this inscription was pasted: "Dear Comrade: The greatness and influence of the United Kingdom are due to the Bible. It is for this reason we send you part of that Book with fraternal greetings from the Post-Office Messengers in Great Britain. Read John 1.29." What is John 1.29? Who spoke these words about Jesus? This is the witness of John, as our first verse tells us.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD SUPERIORITY

John's Attitude toward the Pre-eminent Christ. All the world was flocking to hear John. He stood at the pinnacle of worldly fame. Yet he used every possible expression to make the people see that in comparison with Jesus, who was then an unknown Man, he was nothing, a mere voice crying in the wilderness. He was great enough to rejoice as he prophesied: "He must increase, but I must decrease." Christ is the central Light, he alone must be the cynosure of all eyes.

"Astronomers tell us," writes Dr. W. L. Watkinson, "that the satellites of the various planets are always trying to get away from the orbs around which they revolve, that they, too, as planets, may revolve around the sun. So we must not be content to remain the satellites of men, even of the greatest and best; but aspire to revolve around him who is the Sun of Righteousness. Thank God for the great geniuses of the intellectual world, for the saintly founders of the denominations, but the central Sun must be my center, my light, strength, hope. Let me call no man master; let me be absolutely controlled by Christ, depending on his grace, reflecting his light, vitalized by his fire."

Our Attitude toward Superiority in Others Reveals our Nature. There are two maxims of Goethe's which contain the pure gold of truth in one of the most trying relations of life—our relation to those who are developing gifts and capacities above us: "Against the great superiority of another there is no remedy but love"; and "To praise a man is to put one's self on his level." In these brief and pithy sayings is contained the whole philosophy of a noble attitude towards superiority of all kinds.

There are many who can not meet the test of having friends and associates pass them in the race by force of greater gifts, and who note the development of talent in others, if not with envy, at least with coldness and silence. In such an attitude there is not only a confession of defeat, but the loss of a great opportunity—the loss that is always coming to the egotist. A gift of any kind is a resource added to life, a new contribution to the capital which makes society rich. The right-minded man rejoices when the commonwealth increases, and finds delight in the work which brings in the added riches; the fact that he lives in a modest home makes him all the more appreciative of the general beauty of the metropolis in which he is a citizen. Moreover, as Goethe suggests, we share in great

gifts by recognizing and honoring them. To keep Shakespeare a closed volume because we envy his marvelous power is not to harm Shakespeare but to impoverish ourselves; to take delight in Shakespeare is to partake of his genius and put ourselves on his level. In like manner, to be the first to recognize a dawning superiority in some one who stands near us is not only to give our own nature a beautiful and worthy expression, but to share in the development of a new and inspiring gift. The power of appreciation is itself a beautiful gift, and its culture means the possession of a talent as generous as it is beautiful. To possess it is to drive out the shadow of envy, and to give swift hospitality to truth and beauty. We reveal our own natures by our attitudes towards superiority in others.—H. W. Mabie, in "Works and Days."

II WITNESS-BEARING

The Witness of John the Baptist. Seven times in this first chapter of his Gospel the Evangelist speaks of the witness-bearing of the Baptist. As Jesus needed Peter and John and Paul and the others to follow him and bear their witness to his life and teachings, so he needed John the Baptist to precede him and bear his witness to his coming. All four Gospels tell about the work of John the forerunner of Jesus.

John was surrounded by his followers. Along the highway flocks of sheep were being driven to Jerusalem to be sacrificed at the feast of the Passover. Suddenly the Central Figure of all human history was seen quietly walking with the crowd. The inspiration of the Divine testimony at his baptism and the triumph of his recent victory over the threefold temptation were still with him. John's keen eye discovered him, and pointing to him he exclaimed with prophetic vision, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! There is the One of whom I have been telling you, the One who shall be my successor, the One far mightier than I. To make him known to Israel am I come baptizing in water, yet I knew him not as the Messiah until I saw the Spirit descending upon him. He from whom I have my commission had made known to me that the One on whom the Spirit came and abode was the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This I saw, and I bare record that he is the Son of God."

The Ministry of Witnessing. The Baptist, with his peerless life, and his heart flaming with passionate desire, and his deep-going words and pointing finger, is typical of those whose supreme function is to call attention to the Christ. And who are they? Those who seeing Jesus recognize the Christ, and discover in that recognition a means of blessing for themselves and a message for the world.

It was the greatness of John's character that gave validity to his words. He had but to speak and the disciples were prepared to make their venture. Someone who had gone to hear an aged minister who had been the pastor of the same church for nearly fifty years, ventured the inquiry why the church retained him now that he had lost some of the virility of his earlier ministry. "Well, you see," was the reply, "we know that behind every sermon he preaches there is half a century of Christian living." And it is the life that tells. There are some from whom we do not welcome anything in the nature of religious testimony. We cannot tolerate the name of the Master from lips we suspect. We listen to an expert in any of the sciences because he is an expert, and because the manner of his life does not necessarily invalidate his teaching. But when the subject is religion we make the inexorable demand of character. And if that demand is not met, we cannot listen. "I cannot hear what you say," says Emerson, "because the noise of what you are is tingling in my ears." Fervor divorced from ethics casts a shadow over the Christ it seeks to glorify, and repels those whom it would influence.

Here, then, in a sentence, we have the twofold basis of effective testimony. It must be founded upon conviction and confirmed by character!—H. S. Seekings.

Witnessing by One's Life. One time when Spurgeon was in Italy he wished to purchase some elderflower water, but, as he could not speak Italian, he was unable to make the druggist understand what he wanted. Later he was walking along a brook that ran through the little town and saw the elderflower in blossom. Gathering a handful he returned to the

druggist and at once secured the water. "It is not easy," said Spurgeon, "to convey the gospel to the heart by merely talking of it, but if you can say by your life, 'This is the life of Christ, this is the joy of being a Christian,' you will be much more likely to make converts."

III THE LAMB OF GOD, THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD

John's Prophetic Vision. During his wilderness life, John had meditated deeply on the Old Testament prophecies, and when he pointed out Jesus to his followers and used this striking term, the Lamb of God, he no doubt had in mind the prophecy of Isaiah where the Messiah is described as the lamb led to the slaughter. Then, too, he would think of the great Day of Atonement, when the priest with his hands on the scapegoat confessed over it the sins of the people, and the goat thus symbolically laden was led off to perish in the desert depths.

To the people of Jerusalem who were accustomed to seeing lambs sacrificed each day on the great altar, one every morning and one every evening, the term "Lamb of God" was full of sacrificial meaning. But its application to Jesus they could not comprehend, for they were looking for a kingly Messiah, not one who had come to suffer. Even Jesus' own disciples, after all his teaching, when the time of his sacrificial death approached could not comprehend the meaning of these words of the Baptist. Whence had John his knowledge? We can but marvel thereat, for there is no mystery in the Scriptures deeper than this, that by the blood of the Lamb of God the sins of the world are taken away.

The Only One Who can Take Away Sin. The Meitheis, who are a little known people of Eastern India, have the curious custom of selecting each year a man who gives his name to the year, and during the twelve months bears all the sins of the people. His personal good or ill fortune is supposed to influence the luck of the whole country.

There are better known and finely educated people in India, who, like these Meitheis, are groping after some one to bear their sins. Some years ago Dr. Joseph Cook delivered a famous address at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, following advocates of Eastern philosophies. In this speech he said, turning to the latter: "Gentleman, I beg to introduce a woman to you who has had a great sorrow. She has blood-stains on her hands, and do what she will she can not wash them out. She has been driven to desperation in her distress. The blood is the blood of a murder, and nothing can take away the stain. Is there anything in your philosophies or religions that will tell this woman how to get rid of her great sin?" Of one and then another of the prominent representatives of human theories he seemed to ask his question as though expecting an answer. Then he said, "You have said nothing that tells us how the stain of sin can be washed from a human life." Then, lifting his eyes, he said: "I will ask another. John, can you tell this woman how she can get rid of this awful sin?" The great audience listened breathlessly as Dr. Cook seemed to wait for an answer. And then he said: "Listen, John is speaking, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness . . . the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'"

The One to Whom Every One must Come. A noted English preacher, the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, has related an experience at one of his evangelistic services in London. A hardened criminal came forward to the altar seeking salvation. Mr. Morgan knelt beside him and pointed him to Jesus as the Lamb of God who could cleanse him from all his sins. And he who had been a great sinner believed and was converted. Then Mr. Morgan saw the Mayor of the city, a man of high morals and greatly respected, kneeling at the same altar, and to him, as to the criminal, he pointed out the Lamb of God who alone could take away sins, and in humble self-surrender the Mayor, too, accepted Jesus as his Savior. A short time before this the Mayor had sentenced the criminal to imprisonment, and there at the altar the two shook hands while tears of joy ran down their cheeks. For the worst of sinners and for the best of moralists there is the same Savior. In none other is there salvation, for neither is there any other name under heaven, wherein we must be saved.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 19. "Do you want Christ to represent you above as you represent him here below?"

Verse 23. My true disciples do not believe in Luther, but in Jesus Christ.—Martin Luther.

Verse 27. Modesty is to merit what shade is to figures in a picture, giving it strength and relief.—La Bruyère.

Verse. 27. No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man.—Carlyle.

Verse. 29. Men are not saved by the sacrifices they make but by accepting the sacrifice God makes for them.—C. M. Lamson.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

In his Third Epistle John describes Diotrephes as one "who loveth to have the pre-eminence." Are you like Diotrephes, or like John the Baptist? Are you ever willing to accept undeserved honor from others?

Like John, you are witness-bearers. "You are here to represent Christ—to present him again, to re-present him," Dr. Babcock was fond of saying. "If I stay another week, in your home," said Lord Peterborough to Fénelon, "I shall become a Christian despite myself." Does your home life represent Christ to others? Would your daily life influence another to become a Christian?

There was a time when John did not know Jesus, did not apprehend his true greatness and Divinity. "We only know Christ when we know his Divine glory, his sacrificial death, his pardoning grace, his sanctifying power, and know these great truths in relation to our own personal needs and salvation."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE-CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. See page 24 of our Introduction.

2. The Atonement. See the Third Topic and Chapter CXXVIII of "The One Volume Commentary."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. "Again on the morrow" refers to what time? (Verse 29.) 2. Who were the "two disciples," verse 35? (*Guide*, p. 60.) 3. Why is it probable that the unnamed disciple was John? (*Guide*, p. 25.) 4. What is the Apostle John's usual manner of referring to himself? (Jn. 13.23; 18.15; 19.26; 20.3; 21.20.) 5. How many disciples were called in two days? Name the other disciples. 6. What was the tenth hour? (*Guide*, p. 61.) 7. Whom did Andrew introduce to Jesus as recorded in Jn. 6.8; 12.20-22? 8. What is the force of "Thou shalt be called Cephas"? (*Guide*, p. 61.) 9. Under what circumstances was the name Cephas, or Peter, given to Simon Peter at Caesarea Philippi? (Mt. 16.13-18.) 11. What did Jesus say in Mt. 23.1-8 about the Scribes and Pharisees and the title of Rabbi? 11. Why is it believed that Nathanael and Bartholomew were one and the same? (*Guide*, p. 61.) 12. What are the first three Gospels called? 13. Why is not John included among them? (*Guide*, p. 24).

Questions to Think About. 1. Is this call of Andrew and John and Peter the same as the one recorded in Mt. 4.18-22? (*Guide*, p. 63.) 2. Why is Andrew described as Simon Peter's brother? 3. Why is John careful to explain the meaning of peculiar Jewish expressions? (*Guide*, p. 60.) 4. What is the meaning of verse 47? (*Guide*, p. 61.) 5. What made Andrew and John disciples? 6. What made Peter a disciple? 7. Philip? 8. Nathanael? 9. If John the Baptist had failed to point out Jesus to Andrew and John, what might have happened? 10. Does the task of leading others to follow Christ belong chiefly to ministers? 11. Is membership in the Pocket Testament League helpful in leading others to "Come and see" Jesus? 12. What question in the lesson text has become a proverbial saying, and so used, what does it mean?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory one of the sentence sermons on page 67.

Write in your Note-Book "II. The Witness of John the Baptist to Jesus."

FIRST DISCIPLES OF THE LORD JESUS

Golden Text

Jesus saith unto him, Follow me. John 1:43

LESSON John 1:35-51: verses 35-49 printed. MEMORIZE verses 35-37

35 Again on the morrow, John was standing, and two of his disciples; 36 and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day; it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two that heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). 42 He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas, (which is by interpretation, Peter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Baptist's Testimony and Personal Experience with Jesus Win the First Two Disciples, Andrew and John, 35-39.
- II. Andrew's Testimony and Personal Experience with Jesus Win Peter, 40-42.
- III. Personal Experience with Jesus Wins Philip, 43-44.
- IV. Philip's Testimony and Personal Experience with Jesus Win Nathanael, 45-59.

35. *Again on the morrow.* On the first day of the coming of the deputation from Jerusalem, John proclaimed the Messiah (verse 26); on the second, he pointed Jesus out to his, John's, disciples as the Lamb of God (verse 29); and on the third day, the two disciples followed Jesus (verses 35, 37).—*John was standing.* The imperfect tense may indicate, as has been suggested, the idea of waiting, standing in expectancy.—*Two of his disciples.* Andrew (verse 40) and probably John. The word *disciples* means literally *learners*.

36. *Behold the Lamb of God!* The word "Lamb" is used for Christ more than seventy times in the Book of Revelation.

38. *What seek ye?* "He opened their mouth because he wished to fill it," observes an ancient writer.—*Rabbi.* *Rabbi* was a title of respect, derived from a Hebrew root meaning *great*, and applied by the Jews to their honored teachers. The term originated in the schools of Hillel and Shimeï, in the time of Herod the Great. The Baptist's disciples called him *Rabbi*: see Jn. 3:26.—*Which is to say, being interpreted.* This and similar explanations of terms (see verses 41 and 42) lead us to believe that

John wrote his Gospel especially for the Greeks, who would not understand such Jewish terms.

39. *The tenth hour.* According to the Jewish reckoning this would be four P.M., time being reckoned from sunrise to sunset. Some scholars believe that at Ephesus, where John was writing, time was reckoned as with us, and the tenth hour was therefore ten A.M.—*They came therefore.* They came, they saw, and they were conquered.

40. *Andrew, Simon Peter's Brother.* Thus Andrew is known from the beginning of the Gospel record. We hear little about him and much about Peter, who was the most active of all the disciples, and their spokesman.

41. *He findeth first his own brother.* Andrew sought his brother Simon Peter, and John doubtless sought his brother James, but Andrew was first successful. His success is three times recorded: 1.41; 6.8; 12.22.—*Messiah.* Anointed.—*Christ.* O' *χρῆστος*, Christ, the Anointed One, is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah.

42. *Thou shalt be called Cephas (which is, by interpretation, Peter).* Cephas, the Aramaic name, and *πέτρος*, (Petros), Peter, the Greek name, mean a stone, "a detached piece of rock." This was a prophecy of how Simon would win and deserve the name, because of his steadfastness: see Mt. 16.13-19.

43. *On the morrow.* The fourth day from the coming of the deputation, verse 19.—*He was minded to go forth into Galilee.* From the other side of the Jordan.—*Philip.* See Jn. 6.5-7; 12.20-22; 14.8, 9. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus in the latter part of the second century, refers to Philip as "one of the lights of Asia" (Asia Minor).

45. *Nathanael.* Probably the same person as Bartholomew. John does not mention Bartholomew among the apostles; the Synoptists do not mention Nathanael. His name is always coupled with that of Philip in the lists of the apostles, except in Acts 1.13. As Simon was called Barjona, Son of Jona or John, so Nathanael may have been called Bar Tolmai, Bartholomew, son of Tolmai.—*Of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote.* The clearest Messianic reference in the Law is Dt. 18.15, but the brazen serpent was a type of Christ, Num. 21.9; Jn. 3.14.—*The son of Joseph.* It was customary among the Jews to distinguish a person by giving the name of his father and of his place of residence. Among the Jews Joseph was the reputed father of Jesus: the words are not John's but Nathanael's.

46. *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Nazareth was not far from Cana, Nathanael's home; he knew the rival village too well to think well of it.

47. *An Israelite indeed.* Not merely an Israelite by name and birth, but by character, one who was true to the name of Israel.—*In whom there is no guile!* Guile, or deceitfulness, was the characteristic fault of Jacob: recall the circumstances of the giving of the name Israel to Jacob, in Gen. 32. Nathanael is not a Jacobite, but an Israelite.

48. *When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.* A fig tree in leaf furnishes a secluded spot, and that Nathanael had sought its retreat to meditate about John the Baptist's words is indicated by the next verse.

49. *Rabbi.* This title of respect Nathanael had omitted earlier, verse 48.—*The Son of God; King of Israel.* Both phrases meant to the Jews the Messiah. Jesus had read Nathanael's thoughts and wishes, he must be the Messiah.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

35. *He looked upon Jesus as he walked.* Let us try to picture to ourselves what sort of dress Jesus habitually wore. Upon his head he must always have worn the turban, the national head-gear, used alike by rich and poor. Painters make a mistake when they represent him bareheaded. The turban he wore was probably white. It was fastened under the chin by a cord, and at the side fell down to the shoulders and over the tunic. He wore his hair rather long, and his beard uncut. His tunic, the underneath vesture, was of one piece without seam. Over this he wore the *Talith*, loose and flowing. This mantle was not white, for we are told that it became white during the Transfiguration. It was not red, for that was only the military color. It is possible it was blue, for blue was then very common; or it may have been simply white with brown stripes. In any case, Jesus had at the four corners of his mantle

the *Ciccih*, the blue or white fringes. He wore sandals on his feet, as we learn from John the Baptist; and when he was going from place to place, he doubtless wore a girdle around the loins and carried a stick in his hands.—Edmond Stapfer, in "Palestine in the Time of Christ."

38. *Where abidest thou?* The multitudes who came to hear the preaching could have no other abiding place than the temporary *succoth*, or booths. The sides of these booths were quickly constructed by interweaving branches of palm or terebinth or brushwood. Over the top the useful *abba*, or cloak, was often thrown. Such a shelter the Galilean peasants of today build for themselves as a protection from the wind when overtaken on a journey by nightfall.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What titles were given Jesus in our first lesson? What title was given him by John the Baptist in our last lesson? What did the Baptist mean by calling Jesus "the Lamb of God"? We learn today how Peter was led to become a disciple of Jesus: how did he prove his discipleship at Pentecost, one of our lessons last year?

The Beginning of Fellowship with Jesus. In the spiritual life of every Christian there are unforgettable days and hours. For the Apostle John his first meeting with Jesus was so firmly fixed in his mind that long years after he recorded the day and the hour. It was the day after John the Baptist had declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God, and it was the tenth hour of that memorable day, that the Baptist pointed Jesus out to him and Andrew. The "voice" had fulfilled its mission when it turned these two men away from the herald to the herald's Lord.

The Call of the First Disciples as Told by John and by the Synoptists. This account given by John is evidently of a preliminary call. The five disciples mentioned here do not leave their homes and their occupations to follow Jesus permanently. After they had fellowshiped with Jesus at times, and had learned to know him, Jesus gave them another call (recorded in Mt. 4.18-22; Mk. 1.14-20; and Lk. 5.1-11), and then they left all and followed him.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Galilee was the northern of three provinces of Palestine west of the Jordan. See the Geographical Background of Lesson VI.

Bethsaida, the early home of Andrew and Peter and Philip, was on the road which Jesus would take in going from Bethany beyond Jordan to Cana in Galilee, where he wrought his first miracle. It was on the north-western shore of the Sea of Galilee, but its exact location is not known. This was one of the three cities—Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum—upon which Jesus pronounced his woes, because in them most of his mighty works had been done, and they repented not (Mk. 11.20-24).

Nazareth is eighteen miles west of the Sea of Galilee, in the hill country. It lies in an elevated basin surrounded by hills, "like a rose encircled by its petals," says an ancient writer, and the houses climb up the hillsides. From Nazareth Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem to be taxed, and to Nazareth they returned with Jesus after the flight into Egypt. Here Jesus lived till the beginning of his public ministry, and then he made Capernaum his home.

Cana, the home of Nathanael, was only an hour's distance from Nazareth. Assign paragraphs 42-45 of "In the Master's Country." See p. 55.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In the quotation from the pen of Mr. S. D. Gordon, page 63, is sketched Jesus' method of dealing with his followers, of winning them and teaching them till he could safely leave his work in their hands. The study of the methods of Jesus in winning men should occupy much of your time during these first six months.

"Thou art—thou shalt be"; how often this thought must be in a teacher's mind as he faces his scholars! In a long article in "The Congregationalist," Miss Margaret Slattery has sketched a picture which she says awaits a master's hand. I should entitle it, "Thou Art—Thou Shalt Be." "When I saw it on that morning long ago," writes Miss Slattery, "the back-

ground was an old wooden tenement, a sidewalk littered with scraps, a little black-haired five-year-old with tattered clothing and face unwashed, holding in his hands a spotless lily. He stood oblivious to all about him, gazing down into the heart of it. Were I an artist I should have painted it just as it was, called it Hope and sent it out to inspire the world; for I remembered the dry, brown bulb I had seen one day as it lay half hidden by sand and bits of earth on a shelf in the dark. A human hand had taken it and placed it where God's sunshine and shower could find it, warm it, feed it, and it grew—and now this exquisite thing so alive with fragrance and beauty! I looked at it a long time and my soul tells me as I look that boys and bulbs alike need a human hand to put them where God can waken them and give them a chance to grow. God—and man, I say the last words over with awe, as I realize that there must be two ere the miracle can be wrought."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Mr. Matthew Vassar, the founder of Vassar College, was met one day at the railroad station by a minister, and the two were walking homeward when they passed a blacksmith's shop. "That man by the forge does not believe in Christ," said the minister. "I hope you will have an opportunity to speak with him while you are here with us." "Dear man," said Uncle John, as his friends all called Mr. Vassar, "I'll go and see him now," and he started toward the forge. The astonished pastor saw the blacksmith drop the horse's foot that he was shoeing and listen quietly to Mr. Vassar, and very soon saw them both kneel in prayer behind the forge.

The Apostle John in the words of our lesson today tells us about several men who were just as eager to bring others to believe in Jesus. Who were they? What two men went directly from their talk with the Baptist about Jesus to Jesus himself, and then from their talk with Jesus to talk with others about him?

For Older Pupils. These last verses of the first chapter of John form one of the famous "personal work verses" of the Bible. There are several "findeths" in it. Where are they? John the Baptist findeth Andrew and John, Andrew findeth his brother Peter, John (probably) findeth his brother James, Jesus findeth Philip, and Philip in his turn findeth Nathanael. "We have found"—*εὐρηκαμεν*, eureka^{men}—says the text so often that it has gained the name of "the chapter of Eureka." Eureka, our exclamation of triumph over a discovery, is attributed to Archimedes, "Eureka! eureka! I have found it! I have found it!" he exclaimed on suddenly discovering a method of finding out how much alloy there was in the gold of King Hiero's crown. Perhaps we are more apt to connect "eureka" with substances than with persons, with things physical than with things spiritual, and we shall find it helpful to think about the joy of the discovery of Jesus the Christ which his first followers experienced.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I FOLLOW ME

In the Follow-Me School. Follow me. This is the word Jesus repeats again and again, under different circumstances, with added explanations, to the same men, until you feel that he meant it to stand out as the great invitation to his disciples. It seems to mean different things at different times; that is to say, it grew in its significance.

Peter is a good illustration here. The word really came to him six times, with a different, an added, meaning each time. His first following meant acquaintance (John 1:35-42).

About a year after that "Follow Me" had a new meaning to Peter and some others (Mt. 4:11-22, with Lk. 5:1-11). Then the great draught of fishes after the fishless night made Peter *feel* the Master's power. The sense of Jesus' power and with it a sense of purity—interesting how the power made him feel the purity!—this brought him to his knees at our Lord's feet, with the confession of his own sinfulness. Peter was greatly moved that morning, greatly shaken. A new experience of tremendous

power had come to him. And out of it came a new life, a radical change, as he left the old occupation, fishing, boats, father, means of livelihood, and entered upon the new life. "Follow Me" meant a radical change of life, constant companionship with Jesus, sharing his life, going to school, getting ready for leadership and service; yes, and for suffering, too.

It was some months after this that another meaning grew into the words "Follow Me," and grew out of them. The words are not spoken this time, but acted. Out of the group of disciples that he had gathered about him our Lord prayerfully chose out Peter and the others to be sent out as his messengers to others (Mt. 10.1-5, Mk. 3.14-19; Lk. 6.12-17). Part of the schooling was over, now a new part, a new term, was to begin.

He called them apostles, sent-ones, missionaries. "Follow Me" now meant going to others. It meant more—*power*, power to do for the men all the Master himself had done. First, power *felt* that early morning by the lake, now power given. That was a great advance in training. Power had to be felt before it could be received. And it has to be felt before it can be used.

But there was a special session of the "Follow-Me" school one day, a very serious session (Mt. 16.13-28). The very setting of the words gives the new meaning to them. John the Herald had felt the keen edge of Herod's axe-blade, and was now in the Upper Presence. Jesus was in the far northern part, because of the growing danger threatening him by the leaders.

It is the turning-point, where our Lord Jesus begins to tell them that he was to suffer. Their ears could not take in the words. Suffer? Their dazed eyes show that they think they could not have heard aright—he to *suffer*? What could this mean? Then to Peter's foolish, foolhardy daring, came words spoken with a new intense quietness that made the words quiver: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

"Follow Me" means sacrifice. It means a going down as well as a going up. And it proves to mean that one can go up in power and service only as far as he has gone down in the obedience that includes sacrifice. Did Peter take up the meaning that day? I think not. Actions speak louder than words.

That betrayal night a few short months after, when the actual cross was almost in actual sight, he "followed him afar off" (Mt. 26.58). Without knowing it, that was as far as he had ever really followed thus far. He wanted to keep as "far off" from that cross as possible. He always had. He balked at its first mention, balked tremendously. Yet he "followed." Poor Peter! He was in a terrible strait betwixt two—this wondrous Master whom he really loved, and this threatening cross of nails and things and thorns. It was a stiff struggle between heart and flesh, between the longing of his heart and the shrinking from pain and hardship and shame.

Six months or so after, there came another "Follow Me" to Peter. No, it wasn't another; it was the same one, this one he hadn't accepted. Peter was to have another opportunity at the same place where he fell so badly. How patient our Lord Jesus was—and is!

It was one morning just after breakfast—a rare breakfast—on the edge of the lake, after as poor a night's fishing as that other time (Jn. 21.15-19). Again the touch of power revealed the Master's presence. Again Peter has a special word with the Master while the others are hauling in the fish. Now breakfast is over, and the seven are grouped about the One, listening. The Lord's quiet, skilled hand touches the heart-meaning of "Follow Me." Its real meaning is a love meaning. Do you love? Then "Follow Me." "Lovest thou me?" Then you *must* follow; your love draws you after, even though the path be rough and broken.

Here is the meaning of "Follow Me" as it worked out in Peter's experience—acquaintance, a new life, schooling, service, a sight of sacrifice, and a balking, then—a sight of Jesus on the cross! and then a willingness to go on, even though it meant the sorest sacrifice.

In the thick of our present life, in the noise and din of the street of modern life, comes as of old the quiet, clear, insistent call, "Follow Me."—Condensed from "Quiet Talks on Follow Me," by S. D. Gordon.

The First Step toward Following is "Come and See." A Bulgarian missionary was talking with a German Jew. "I want you to consent to be a Christian for twenty-four hours; then you may see how it seems and how you like it," said the missionary. The Jew consented. "Well, then, continued the missionary, "I want you to believe that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world." "Impossible, impossible! I could not believe that." "But it is only for twenty-four hours." "Well, all right; I will till tomorrow." "I want you to believe that Jesus arose from the dead, and that he ascended into heaven." "Oh, oh, that I could not do." "But just for the time being." He consented. "I want you to kneel down with me and pray to Christ the Savior." And the Jew prayed, "O God! Jehovah! If Christ be the true Son of God, let him save me!" The next day the Jew came to the missionary and said, with a smile on his face and peace in his heart, "I will take him for another twenty-four hours."

II HE FIRST FINDETH HIS OWN BROTHER

What the Result May Be. Andrew found his brother Peter and led him to Jesus. Henceforth it is Peter, not Andrew, whom we hear of as the man of action. On that marvelous day of Pentecost, several years afterwards, Peter led three thousand men and women to become followers of Christ. Some one has said that if Peter were the spiritual father of all those converts certainly Andrew was their spiritual grandfather.

During one term at Yale the elder President Dwight influenced a large number of students to become Christians, and it is said that through their efforts throughout a lifetime fifty thousand were led into the Kingdom.

A Sunday-school teacher called at a shoe store where a young man of his class was a clerk, and found the lad in the back part of the store arranging shoe-boxes, and there he urged him to become a Christian. This teacher's influence led him to Christ. The lad was Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist who led a multitude to the Savior. Here is what Mr. Moody said about the results of personal Christian work: "Away up the mountainside there is a little spring; it seems so small that an ox might drink it up at a draught. By and by it becomes a rivulet; other rivulets run into it. Before long it is a large brook, and then it becomes a broad river sweeping onward to the sea. On its banks are cities, towns, and villages, where many thousands live. Vegetation flourishes on every side, and commerce is carried down its stately bosom to distant lands. So if you turn one to Christ, that one may turn a hundred; the hundred may turn a thousand, and so the stream, small at first, goes on broadening and deepening as it rolls toward eternity."

Philip's Method with Nathanael. What a comforting thing that Philip did not say, "Well, Nathanael, let's argue this out about Nazareth." Then if it is going to be a debate between Nathanael, who knows all about the Jewish theology, and Philip, who does not know any theology at all, Nathanael is going to win, and Philip is going to be beaten. But a shrewd man is Philip. He did not know books, but he knew life. He says, "Oh, no, Nathanael, I will not argue with you. Put that book away, Nathanael. There is a better way for you and a better way for me. Clever as you are, you are on the wrong road. Nathanael, I saw him. You have never seen his eyes as I have seen them. You have never heard the ring in his voice. You never felt the power that I felt when he said, 'Follow me.' And you never heard what he said, as we walked along the road together, and I told him I had a friend in Cana who wished to see his face. Nathanael, come and see him yourself face to face."—John Watson.

A Word to Fathers and Mothers. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman has reported a conversation which he heard between the evangelist Sunday and a young man as they were walking away from the tent where a meeting had been held. "Your mother wants you to be a Christian, for I know she is a Christian," said Mr. Sunday, "and your father would be pleased, because he is an officer in the church." The boy said nothing at first, but his final word to Mr. Sunday was, "Possibly you may not believe what I am to say, but neither my father nor my mother has ever asked me to be a Christian, and I never expect to be until they do." "It is

a burning snare," exclaimed Dr. Chapman, "that I should be obliged to waste one minute of my time or one ounce of my strength to try to persuade fathers and mothers to speak to their children about Christ."

The Lesson Miss Havergal never Forgot. "I ought to have been yours," said a bright, happy girl to Miss Frances Havergal. "What do you mean?" was the reply. "When I was seeking the Savior, I put myself in your way several times, hoping that you would speak to me about this matter, but you did not speak to me, and another led me to the Savior."

III THOU ART—THOU SHALT BE

Only Jesus Christ Has a "Shalt Be" for Every One. "Thou art Simon"—and this means, says Dr. J. H. Jowett, "just a listener, not yet a strong, bold doer; a man of many opinions not yet consolidated into the truth of experimental convictions. 'Thou shalt be called Peter.' Simon become Peter! Loose gravel become hard rock! Hearsays become the 'verities' of unshakable experience! The Lord proclaims our glorious possibilities."

Dr. J. D. Jones points out that in this contrast—Thou art . . . thou shalt be—we have the optimism, the redeeming optimism of Jesus. "No man," he adds, "can be a redeemer who has not a 'shalt be' for the persons he seeks to redeem. Plato could not be a redeemer to the poor and low-born of Greece, he had no 'shalt be' for them. Priests and scribes could not be redeemers to the publicans and sinners of Palestine. They had no 'shalt be' for them. There are plenty of men who can diagnose the condition of mankind today with exactness, who can point out the ill and describe the malady, but they can do nothing to redeem, because they know no cure. Thomas Hardy can describe with terrible fidelity man's misery and woe, but he can do little to redeem him; he has no 'shalt be.' But Jesus Christ is fitted to be the world's Redeemer just because he has a 'shalt be' for every one. Taking us just as we are, he tells us of something better and nobler, which by the grace of God we may become. 'Thou art . . . thou shalt be.' He has a 'shalt be' for us, no matter how desperate and hopeless our case may appear to be."

The Far-reaching Evangelism of a Better Life. The average Christian needs to know how far-reaching is the ministry that goes out from a single life whose motive and spirit are all transformed. Henry Drummond used to say that ten Christians who became notably different and far better Christians would produce a greater effect in the world than a hundred who were induced to enter the Christian life for the first time. The vast spiritual changes for which we naturally hunger may come to pass in more homely and familiar ways than we are wont to look for. The world will begin to wonder at the Church far more through something that happens to the Christian people themselves than it will through some showy and dramatic increase of its numbers.

There is not a day which we cannot make tell for a religious revival by the neighborly evangelism of living holier lives ourselves and doing whatsoever we do in a very different spirit from what we have been manifesting.—Editorial in "The Sunday School Times."

The Influence of a "Shalt Be." A young woman sought Miss Margaret Slattery's help at a Northfield Conference. In the course of the conversation that followed, she gave this as the reason for her desire to find Christ. "Two years ago Ethel D. came up here. She roomed with me at school, and is my very good friend. In school she was the most absolutely selfish girl I ever knew. She was critical, snobbish, and exceedingly thoughtless. She had few friends, a great deal of money, but never helped in anything to any extent. She came up here. When she came back she said she was going to be a real Christian. We laughed. She did not talk very much, but she was different. We all saw it. There has been a very great change in two years, and I want to tell you that today Ethel is one of the sweetest girls in our city. She is interested in every good thing, and when you are with her you feel that she is really happy and content. She has united with her church, and her brothers go with her every Sunday. I came up here to see what did it. I want to be different myself. I would like to have the real joy in doing things that she has. I would like to understand it *all*."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 35. No one whose *self* is prominent can win souls.—C. G. Trumbull.

Verse 37. The greatest thing is not theology, nor controversy, but saving souls.—Matthew Henry.

Verse 37. I think it is a greater happiness to gain one soul to Christ than mountains of silver and gold.—Matthew Henry.

Verse 41. The nearer the soul is to us, the greater the responsibility for it.—Dr. T. L. Cuyler.

Verse 45. The great problem is not how to save the world, but how to persuade the Christian that it is his business to be the means of saving some one man in the world.—Dr. C. H. Parkhurst.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

All seekers may become finders in the spiritual realm. "Come and see," said Jesus. Seeking leads first to investigation, communion. Communion with Jesus leads to comprehension, belief, acceptance of him as the Savior, following him and serving him as Lord and Master.

All finders may become seekers of others. They who have found the Christ should feel constrained to make him known to their friends. To call attention to Jesus is a very simple thing to do, some one has said, and is also the most genuine tribute and the most effective service one can offer him. To defend him is not so necessary as to declare him; to explain him is not so important as to reveal him.

Have you sought and found Christ? Are you doing any recruiting for him? Are you doing it by your words? Are you doing it by your lives?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Methods of Evangelistic work. See "The Sunday-school's True Evangelism," "Sunday School Times," Aug. 7, 1915.

2. "Come and see" is the invitation unto all truth. See Chapter VIII of Phillips Brooks' "The Battle of Life"; Chapter IV of Henry W. Clark's "The Christ from Without and Within."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Locate Jerusalem, Capernaum, and Cana. 2. Why does John speak of going *up* to Jerusalem. (*Guide*, p. 71.) 3. What was the Passover? (*Guide*, p. 68.) 4. How many Temples have there been on the same spot in Jerusalem? 5. By what name was the Temple of the time of Christ called, and why? 6. What did the word Temple include? (*Guide*, p. 69.) 7. In what part of the Temple was the traffic carried on? (*Guide*, p. 69.) 8. How had the traders gained their position in the Temple Court? (*Guide*, p. 69.) 9. Why did the merchants come with their cattle to the temple? 10. For what purpose were the money-changers there? (Ex. 30.13; *Guide*, p. 69.) 11. Why were the doves there? (Lev. 1.14.) 12. On what occasions did Jesus show that he could be stern? 13. When did Jesus first speak about his "Father's house"? (Lk. 2.49.) 14. Where is the quotation in verse 17 found? 15. When was the saying of Jesus in verse 19 remembered and used against Jesus? (Mt. 26.61; Mk. 14.58.) 16. In what respects is John different from the Synoptic Gospels? (*Guide*, p. 24.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did the Jews allow the cleansing of the Temple? (Mk. 11.18; Lk. 19.47, 48.) 2. Of what claim did the Jews evidently deem Jesus' act an evidence? 3. What is meant by the word "sign," and why did the Jews ask for one? (*Guide*, p. 69.) 4. Is it ever right to be angry? 5. How is the moral authority of goodness shown in this event? 6. How is the cowardice of sin shown? 7. What was the ideal which Jesus had for God's house? 8. Why do we have churches? 9. In what ways do we worship God there? 10. How may your place of worship be to you a place of traffic? 11. Is the spirit of reverence in our Sunday School all that it should be? 12. If it is not, what can our class do about it?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory John Hay's stanzas, p. 74.

Write in your Note-Book "III. The First Disciples of Jesus."

REVERENCE OF JESUS FOR HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

Golden Text

My house shall be called a house of prayer. Matthew 21:13

LESSON John 2:13-22 MEMORIZE verses 15, 16

13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; 16 and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up. 18 The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Driving out the Desecrators of the Temple, 13-17.

II. Denying the Demand for a Sign, 18-22.

13. *The passover of the Jews.* The passover was one of their three great annual festivals. It commemorated the "passing over" of the first-born of the Jews when those of the Egyptians were destroyed on the last night of the captivity in Egypt. The words "of the Jews" may have been added for the sake of Greek readers, or in order to distinguish it from the Christian Easter, which was sometimes called "Pascha," Pass-over.—*Up to Jerusalem.* Capernaum, where Jesus was, verse 12, was on the Sea of Galilee six hundred and eighty feet below sea level; Jerusalem was twenty-six hundred feet above sea level.

14. *In the temple.* The word "temple" may refer to the sanctuary alone, or to the surrounding courts. Here the reference is to the Court of the Gentiles, which the Jews considered profane. See *Light from Oriental Life*.—*Oxen and sheep and doves.* The sacrificial animals mentioned in Lev. 1:2.—*The changers.* Those who gave Jewish coin in exchange for foreign coin. See *Light from Oriental Life*.

15. *He made a scourge of cords.* See p. 70. "And is this 'the Lamb of God'? Yes! 'the Lamb of God' is also 'the Lion of Judah.' The mild sunshine can become focused into scorching flame!" (Dr. Jowett).—*And cast all out of the temple.* "The very point of the story is, not that he, by mere force, can drive out so many men, but that so many are seen retiring before the moral force of One, a mysterious Being, in whose face and form the indignant flush of innocence reveals a tremendous feeling they can no wise comprehend, much less are able to resist" (Horace Bushnell).

16. *Take these things hence.* The doves were in baskets or cages.—*My Father's house.* Compare Lk. 2:49. This was a clear claim of his Divine Sonship.—*A house of merchandise.* See *Light from Oriental Life*.

17. *His disciples remembered.* At the time, not afterwards as in verse 22.—*It was written.* Ps. 69:9.—*Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.* The Greek word, *zein*, whence come our word *zeal*, means to *boil*, *seethe*; the heart of Jesus "boiled" at the evil practice. In the Psalm from which this is a quotation the writer is complaining of the persecution and calamities which he has brought upon himself through his zeal for God; the Psalm is quoted as messianic in Jn. 15:25; 19:28, and elsewhere.

18. *The Jews.* The priests and rulers.—*Answered.* Their words were an answer to Jesus' act.—*What sign.* What miraculous endorsement. Sign is John's usual word for miracle. They ask him to perform a miracle to prove that he has the right to do what he has just done.

19. *Destroy this temple.* Or *sanctuary*, RVm. "The imperative is permissive." The Greek word *δοῦρε*, destroy, means primarily loose—"it indicates a destruction which comes from dissolution, from the breaking of that which binds the parts into a whole." The words were intended to bear a double sense: the play of words is upon *temple*, which the Jews naturally took to mean the inmost sanctuary, the shrine of God, while Jesus referred to his body, also the shrine of God. See verse 21 and compare Mt. 12.38-40, where Jesus also predicts his resurrection. For the way in which this saying was remembered and used against Jesus, see Mt. 26.61 and Mk. 14.58.

20. *Forty and six years was this temple in building.* This was the third, or Herod's temple. Two other temples had stood on the same spot: Solomon's Temple, which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and Zerubbabel's Temple, which five hundred years later Herod the Great had rebuilt on a more magnificent scale. So loth had the Jews been to see Zerubbabel's Temple torn down, and so suspicious of Herod's purpose, that he was forced to promise them not to tear down any portion of the temple until the stones for its reconstruction were waiting on the spot. According to Josephus, Herod began this work in 20 B.C. and the temple was finished by Herod Agrippa II in 64 A.D. The Jews speak of it at this time as completed, for the work had evidently stopped.

21. See verse 19. This is the evangelist's interpretation. The interpretation of Jesus' meaning given by some scholars is: "When this old dispensation of the Ceremonial Law is destroyed, I will quickly raise up in its place a new and spiritual religion."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

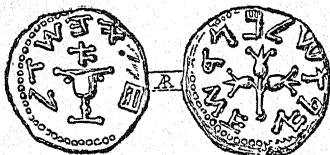
14. *He found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves.* No building could be held in greater reverence than was the sanctuary itself. "What is the reverence due the temple?" asked the rabbis, and they answered: "That none go through the court of it with his staff and shoes and purse, and dust upon his feet, and that none make of it a common thoro-fare, or let any of his spittle fall upon it."

The word *temple*, however, was applied to the whole enclosure, which included a thousand square feet, and it was the outermost court or Court of the Gentiles, for whose sanctity the priests cared less, which had been made "a house of merchandise." At first traders near the temple precincts supplied the animals for sacrifice together with the salt, oil, wine, meal, and frankincense used for various offerings, and then gradually, no doubt, they carried on their noisy wrangling nearer and nearer till at last they had established themselves within the Court of the Gentiles itself. For the privilege it is thought that the priests received handsome revenues. Around this court four rows of pillars ran, magnificent granite columns, roofed with cedar, and here the traders found shade. Often exorbitant prices were asked for the sacrificial animals. Edersheim relates that Simeon (who was called "The Just") reduced the price of a pair of doves from a gold denarius to half a silver one.

Similar abuses exist in Eastern lands today. A traveler writes: "I never see one of those places famed as resorts for worship of the gods in India without thinking of the Master and his whip of small cords as he drove the money-changers and merchants out of the temple. In the great Hindu temple at Cawnpore the petty merchant was much in evidence with his small booth for the sale of things connected with the worship, and it resembled nothing so much as the side-show equipment of the ordinary circus, or the environs of a fair-grounds at home."

14. *And the changers of money.* The temple poll-tax of a half-shekel must be paid at this festival, and there were also contributions expected for the morning and evening sacrifices and for other "causes." In the Court of the Women there were thirteen trumpet-shaped boxes, each inscribed with its

special religious or charitable cause, into which offerings were cast. The temple-tax and all the contributions had to be made in Jewish money, that the temple



Silver Half-Shekel

might not be profaned with money bearing idolatrous symbols or emblems of submission to an alien king. As the current money was Roman, and there were also Persian, Tyrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Grecian, and other coins in circulation, money-changers were a necessity. But they were not needed within the temple enclosure itself. "We can picture to ourselves the scene," writes Dr. Edersheim,

"the weighing of the coins, the deductions for loss of weight, the arguing, disputing, bargaining; and we can realize the terrible truthfulness of our Lord's charge that they had made his Father's house a mart and place of traffic."

15. *He made a scourge of cords.* Scattered about everywhere on the floor of the court were rushes used for litters and for tying up the cattle. It may have been these rushes which Jesus twisted together for a whip.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What was our Golden Text two weeks ago? Does this expression make you think of a militant Savior? What "sign" did Jesus give Nathanael and of what did it convince Nathanael?

The Miracle at Cana. Nathanael had believed in Jesus because Jesus had told him of seeing him under the fig-tree and of reading his thoughts: he should see yet greater things, Jesus told him; he should see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. By this Jesus meant that a stronger reason for Nathanael's faith would be the realization that he is the means of communication between Heaven and earth.

The production of "greater things" received its first fulfillment in the first miracle of Jesus, one which showed alike his power and his kindly courtesy. With his newly-found disciples he had gone to Cana of Galilee, where his mother was, and all had been invited to a wedding feast. Perhaps more guests were present than the humble household had provided for; the supply of wine gave out, and Mary informed Jesus. She wished to aid her friends, but may we not also suppose that she wished her Son to make himself famous by some brilliant display of his power? Jesus rebuked her thoughts by telling her that the time for his self-revelation had not yet come. Though she may not have understood fully his words, she had faith in his kindness and bade the servants do whatever he commanded. Jesus told them to fill the water-pots with water and then draw it out and carry it to the one in charge of the feast, who found it to be wine of such superior quality that he hastened to tell the bridegroom that, contrary to the usual custom, he had kept the best wine till the last.

From Cana Jesus went to Capernaum for a few days, and then to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover, where he cleansed the Temple.

The Cleansing of the Temple as Recorded in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel. The Synoptists report a cleansing of the Temple at Jesus' last Passover—four days before his crucifixion. John gives an account of the cleansing of the Temple at the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry: thus showing that Jesus by this authoritative act and by his words "my Father's house," which proclaimed his right to the Messianic title of "the Son of God," early asserted his claims before the whole nation. In order to reconcile the accounts of the Synoptists and of John, many believe that there were two cleansings of the Temple. Possibly Matthew, Mark, and Luke recorded during the last Passover week of Christ's ministry events which occurred at earlier Passover seasons, because they were more intent upon the logical than the chronological connection. When the priests at the trial of Jesus before Caiaphas tried to get hearsay evidence in regard to this utterance of Jesus about destroying the Temple they failed: had it been spoken that very week rather than some three years earlier, it does not seem likely that such witnesses would have been lacking.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jerusalem, the capital, is situated on the highest part of the highlands of Judea, two thousand six hundred feet above sea level. It is thirty miles from the Mediterranean Sea and eighteen miles from the Jordan. Ravines surround the city on all sides except on the north. East of the city the Valley of the Kidron separates it from the Mount of Olives; around the southern and western sides curves the Valley of Hinnom, and through the city itself runs the Tyropoean Valley. Jesus was presented in the Temple at Jerusalem as an infant, and he made his first visit to it as a lad of twelve years of age. Our lesson records the first visit of his public ministry.

Assign paragraphs 119, 120, and 125 of "In the Master's Country." See p. 55.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

There is one thing which no child brings into this world with him, and without which all other things are of no use. So Carlyle declares: to what does he refer? Reverence. Reverence is regarding and treating worthy beings and worthy qualities and worthy things worthily, and is it not true that no child knows without being taught what are the most worthy things, nor how he can treat them worthily? If every child learned reverence for sacred places as did this little girl about whom I have read, Sunday-school teaching would be far easier. She was living for a time with her mother in very crowded quarters at a hotel. It chanced that a room near by, "Number 4," was vacant, and the mother obtained from the proprietor permission to use it a while every morning for her devotions. One day the mother was trying to explain to her little daughter the words to Moses, "the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," and was at a loss for words simple enough which yet would express the meaning. As she hesitated for the words, the child looked up brightly and exclaimed, "I know, it was like Number 4."

We are often told that there is far less reverence in children today than in former times. Certainly the external signs of reverence are not so much in evidence as formerly. Reverence is a spirit and attitude of mind. You can inculcate reverence in your pupils by leading them to recognize the sacred character of God and of the things associated with his worship, and by your own example when in the house of God. The very routine of the exercises of song and prayer may result in mechanical habits on your part of which you are unaware, but which your pupils are quick to recognize and adopt.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. How old was Jesus when his parents first took him to Jerusalem? What festival did they attend there? Who will tell the story of how his mother lost and found him? What were his words to her when she reproved him? All his life Jesus was "about his Father's business." At the beginning of his public life we hear of his attending another Passover Feast at Jerusalem, and finding that the people had profaned his "Father's house," as he called the Temple. Some there may have been among those present at this scene who remembered hearing him question and answer the learned rabbis many years before. The lad of twelve, eager to learn about his Father's business, is now the Man of thirty, zealous to maintain his Father's honor.

For Older Pupils. There is always danger that we may be blind to the enormity of abuses by reason of their very familiarity. Things have always been thus and so, custom has accepted them, who shall rise up against them?

After the Roman Empire had become Christianized, the brutal gladiatorial games still continued. For centuries the citizens of Rome had been wont to delight in these bloody sights, and they maintained that the gladiators themselves wished them continued, preferring an early death to giving up their chance of winning immortal fame—greater fame even than prize-fighters in our day secure—and that, in any event, the enjoyment of the many was obtained only at the expense of the few. In 404 a great victory over the Goths was being celebrated. The gladiators had entered the

arena and given their customary cry, "*Ave Caesar, morituri te salutamus*" (Farewell, Caesar, we who are about to die salute thee), when a monk from the East, Telemachus by name, leaped down beside them. "The gladiators shall not fight: would you thank God by shedding innocent blood?" he cried out. Angry shouts rose from the thousands of spectators, and the monk was at once run through with swords by the praetor's orders. He gave his life, but his martyrdom opened the eyes of Honorius, and he issued an edict abolishing the games for ever.

Long before the Reformation the flagrant abuse of the sale of indulgences had become manifest to many whose spirits were yet so deadened by custom or cowed by fear that they made no attempt to fight it. One there was, who thought not with Hamlet:

"The time is out of joint; O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right";

but boldly attacked Tetzels and the rest, and brought about the Reformation.

The sacredness and quietness of the Temple precincts at Jerusalem had been destroyed by the sale in the Court of the Gentiles of the animals needed for the sacrifice and by the exchange of foreign and Jewish money. The Gentile proselytes were thereby given scant room and no peace for their worship, to be sure; the neighboring courts of the Jews were disturbed by the incessant turmoil, the house of God was desecrated, but it was very convenient to get their half-shekel for the treasury and their lamb for the sacrifice right on the spot, and, besides, it had always been the custom, as far as they knew.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Going into the House of Jehovah in Nyassaland. A missionary was travelling in a distant part of Nyassaland, where no European preacher had yet been. One afternoon he reached a native village. Soon the headman of the village and several others came to greet him, offering a hearty welcome. The missionary told them the purpose of his journey, stating that he was a messenger of the Great God and that he came to tell them of his salvation.

"Oh, yes," replied the headman, "we know about him."

"What do you mean?" asked the missionary. "What do you know about him, and from whom have you heard?"

"Some time back," was the answer, "one of the boys from your mission passed this way. He carried a book with him, and when we asked him what it was, he said that it was the Word of God in our language. We asked him to read to us out of it, and when we had heard we wanted to hear more, so we persuaded him to stay with us a little while."

"Then he told us that if we wanted to worship the Great God, out of whose Book he was reading to us, we must do two things. First of all, we must rest one day out of seven, and next we must build a house in which to pray to him. We agreed to do so, and went to the forest to cut poles, while our wives cut grass for the roof. And so we built the house that you see there, which is the House of God."

"Well, the youth remained with us for some weeks, reading to us out of the Word of God and praying for us. Afterwards he had to proceed on his journey. But although we have no one to teach us we still worship God in his house."

"And how do you worship him now?" asked the missionary.

"We just come together on every seventh day, and sit down in the House of God, and there we wait before him and are quite silent. We have no one to read to us or teach us, and we do not know how to pray, so we just sit still, and we think that the great God will see us, and he will say, 'There are some people who have no one to teach them and who want the Word,' and perhaps he will send us a teacher."—Andrew C. Murray, in "The Bible in the World."

How Can One Profit by Public Prayer? If, when the minister says, "Let us pray," your thoughts immediately rush off in all secular directions, it is your duty to run after them, and bring them back and

compel them to prostrate themselves before God's throne. If the minister is sent to be your leader in prayer, how can he lead unless you follow? How can you profit by public prayer? By deciding once for all that you will let your leader lead you. Fall in with his mood. Take his point of view. Compel your mind to keep step with him. Drive off all foreign thoughts which attempt to break into the circle of his petitions. At the close of his every thanksgiving, doxology, adoration, confession, and petition, say in your heart, "Amen"—which being interpreted means, "So let it be." These silent Amens, like chains of gold, will bind you to your leader's soul, and along with him you will pass into the light and joy and peace of the Eternal.—Charles E. Jefferson, in "Christian Endeavor World."

Form the Habit of Meeting God at Church. William Law was an English clergyman of whom others said that one could not doubt God's presence when he prayed. His method of "practicing the presence of God" has been thus described. He definitely set aside in his bedroom and also in his study a little place for secret prayer. He never let himself do anything ordinary in that spot; he only prayed there. The result was that in time just kneeling there brought him into the spirit of prayer. It became a habit of his mind, unaffected by any other experiences in that particular place. He knew that God is as real everywhere as anywhere; but for him God grew to be more real there than anywhere else, because he had formed the definite habit of meeting him there. Such a trysting place with God may the church of his choice become to every Christian.

II MAKING THE FATHER'S HOUSE A HOUSE OF MERCHANDISE

A Common Way. The captain of a whaler went ashore one Sunday and attended a church service. The minister spoke to him after the sermon, and found that no impression had been made upon his mind. "The fact is, sir," the captain acknowledged, "all the while you were preaching I was thinking about where I should be likely to find a whale. There is no room in my heart for anything but whales." The one who recounts this conversation added: "We are not surprised that a whale should take up a good deal of room in a man's heart; and if all were equally honest, they would confess that the real reason that the service of the sanctuary did them no good was that their hearts were too full of business to listen."

The spirit in which you go to church largely determines the manner in which you worship there and the help which the service is to you. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God," and on the way put out of your mind all the things which must occupy it so constantly during the week, for you are drawing near to God, your Heavenly Father.

"Remember it is the house of God;

Be reverent, be silent, be thoughtful."

There is little outward irreverence in our churches, but could you read the thoughts of the worshipers, would you find them always reverent?

"Beware of setting up your business in the temple of public worship" warns a forceful preacher. "Alas for you if the din of bargaining voices comes up through the harmonies of the anthems, and if you convert the petitions of the prayer into counters on which you transact your business! If you can not worship God on Sunday without thinking of your business it is high time you were taking hold of yourself. Pray to Christ that he may drive the mercenary spirits out."

Before Worship. As the musician tunes his instrument
Ere yet harmoniously be interwoven
The melodies of Mozart or Beethoven,
His viol's note with keynote fitly blent,
So when I come into thy temple, Lord,
From out the world's distractions and its noises
I shut my ears to all but heavenly voices
And tune my soul to be in true accord
With the celestial strains.

—Joseph A. Torrey.

A Solemn Function. The gathering of Christians together in the house of God, to pray to God, to praise him, to hear his messages, should be a most solemn function. Our feelings when we assemble for this pur-

pose should ever be, "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"; and with Jacob we should say, "Surely God is in this place; this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven." There is something shocking in levity and vanity, in frivolous chatter, in the lounging somnolence born of over-eating and over-drinking; in the conceited irreverence and unseemly demeanor, which too often pain us in scenes of Christian worship.—Dr. F. W. Farrar, in "A Voice from Sinai."

III RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION

Jesus' Indignation Contrasted with Ours. The irritation which we so often feel, the exasperation which lacerates and rends the heart, the bitterness of which we are ashamed—all these were absent from Jesus' anger. His wrath was the hottest ever known upon our earth, but the heart in which it burned was sinless. Our anger is frequently a manifestation of our selfishness. We become indignant over trifles. The street-car does not stop, or somebody carelessly knocks off our hat, or a servant disappoints us; and we are all aflame. Our comfort has been molested, our rights have been entrenched upon, our dignity has been affronted, and we are downright mad. Ravelings and shavings can set us blazing. But in the presence of gigantic outrages perpetrated on the helpless and the weak, some of us are as calm as a summer morning. Bad men do not make us angry unless they interfere with our own personal affairs. If they wrong others we will make excuses for them.

Our indignation, then, is quite different from that of Jesus. His anger never had its root in selfishness. When men abused him, he was unruffled. When they lied about him, his pulse-beat was not quickened. When they nailed his hands to the cross, no trace of anger darkened his face. His calm lips kept on praying, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was when he saw his brother men abused that his great soul rose in wrath. The more helpless the person who was mistreated, the hotter was the fire of his indignation. Against rich people who imposed upon the poor, and against clever people who took advantage of the ignorant, and against strong people who mistreated the weak, and against crafty, people who laid traps for the innocent, his soul blazed with a heat which became an imperishable and awe-inspiring memory in the apostolic church.—Condensed from "The Character of Jesus," by Charles E. Jefferson.

Thy Will be Done.

When tyrant feet are trampling
Upon the common weal,
Thou dost not bid us bend and writhe
Beneath the iron heel.
In thy name we assert our right
By sword or tongue or pen,
And even the headsman's axe may flash
Thy message unto men.

Thy will! It bids the weak be strong;
It bids the strong be just;
No lip to fawn, no hand to beg,
No brow to seek the dust.
Wherever man oppresses man
Beneath thy liberal sun,
O Lord, be there thine arm made bare,
Thy righteous will be done.

—John Hay, in "Harper's Magazine."

The Christian's Question. Am I more capable than I was of anger against all forms of sin and iniquity? Am I more daring and courageous than I used to be in my opposition to everything that opposes itself against God? If I am more like Jesus Christ, I am at once more tender and more severe, more gentle, winsome and winning, and more terrific in my denunciation of evil, and in my battle against it.—G. Campbell Morgan, in "The Simple Things of the Christian Life."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 15. Meekness has its uses, but meekness may easily drift into mere cowardice, into connivance with evil, into complaisance toward wrong.

—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

Verse 16. No noble nature yet was ever irreverent.—Dr. F. W. Farrar.

Verse 16. Tell me what you say when you look at evil, and I will tell you whether you are a Christian man or not.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

Verse 17. "If you find your patience degenerating into indifference, it is time to become impatient."

Verse 21. Our heart is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and all its courts and chambers must be free of the profane traffic of evil.—George Reith.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Let us beware lest we desecrate the courts of the Lord with thoughts about business or other cares, with thoughts that are vain and frivolous, or with thoughts that are merely indifferent. Let us make our Father's house in truth a house of prayer.

"Enter in, Lord, cleanse thy temple,
Give the grace to put away
All that hinders, all that's doubtful,
O'er my life hold blessed sway."

Let us cultivate and reverently cherish the honest indignations of our nature, for they are the life and fire that is in us. God has given them, and the man is most happy who has them the warmest, the truest, the least wrenched by prejudice, the least dulled by sense and sin.—Phillips Brooks.

Say not "The days are evil—who's to blame?"

And fold the hands and acquiesce—O, shame!

Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.—M. D. Babcock.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The place of the child in the church as a worshiper. See "Little Folks at Church," "The Outlook," Feb. 22, 1913.

2. The commercializing of the pulpit and of the religious press.

3. Not to oppose injustice when one can, is to be oneself guilty of injustice. What reforms should your class help to bring about? See "Did Jesus Christ Teach Non-Resistance?" "The Outlook," Nov. 10, 1915, p. 596.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What position among the Jews did Nicodemus hold? 2. To what experience of the wilderness wanderings does Jesus refer in verse 14? (Num. 21.4-9.) 3. Tell the story of the brazen serpent. 4. Did Nicodemus live to see the fulfilment of the prophecy in verse 14? (John 19.39.) 5. What further information about Nicodemus does John give us? (Jn. 7.50.) 6. Look up the references given in the margin of the Revised Version to God's love for the world. (Refer to verse 16; before the words "loved the world" you will notice the letter *q*. At the bottom of the column, under *q*, the references are given.) 7. What do the words "eternal life" mean? (Jn. 17.3; Rom. 6.23; 1 Jn. 2.23-25.) 8. What is it John tells us in his first Epistle that we ought to do if God so loved us? (1 Jn. 4.11.) 9. What does the Fourth Gospel omit which the others include? (*Guide*, p. 27.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Nicodemus visit Jesus? 2. Why did he come at night? (*Guide*, p. 77.) 3. Why was he astonished at Jesus' words about being born anew? 4. What are some of the evidences that one is born anew? 5. How is the comparison of the new birth with the wind a fitting one? 6. Where is our Golden Text found? 7. What is John 3.16? 8. Does God love sinners? 9. What verse declares the Divine nature to be love? 10. What is the nature of that love? (Self-sacrificial.) 11. What is the object of that love? 12. What is the result of that love? 13. What is the condition of securing the gift? 14. What is the effect of rejecting it? 15. What is the effect of accepting it? 16. What is man's greatest need? 17. What is God's greatest gift?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory John 3.16.

In your Note-Book write "IV. Jesus' Righteous Anger."

JESUS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

Golden Text

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

LESSON John 3:1-21: verses 5-17 printed. MEMORIZE verses 5, 6

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. 8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. 8 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, *even* the Son of man, who is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; 15 that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Kingdom, 1-12.
 1. The Necessity for the New Birth, 1-6.
 2. The Mystery of the New Birth, 7-12.
- II. The King, 13-21.
 1. The Atonement, 13-17.
 2. Rejecting the Atonement, 18-21.

5. *Jesus answered.* See the Historical Background.—*Verily, verily.* When Jesus uses these words we always know that something especially solemn and important are to follow. Jesus here speaks thus emphatically because of Nicodemus' attitude, who deemed it impossible that he, a Pharisee and ruler, must undergo any change in order to enter the Kingdom.—*Be born of water and the Spirit.* There must be an inward, spiritual change. "To be born of water and the Spirit" was a familiar metaphor used by the rabbis when Gentiles became Jewish proselytes: such converts to Judaism acknowledged the fact by being publicly baptized. The usual interpretation here is that Jesus tells Nicodemus that there must be a change wrought in his life through the power of the Spirit, and that he should make the change known by being baptized. Note that in the next verse, and again in verse 8, the "water" is omitted, and the new man is said to be "born of the Spirit."

6. *Born of the flesh.* By natural birth.—*Is flesh.* Human only.—*The Spirit.* The Holy Spirit.

7. *Ye must be born anew.* Or, *from above*, RVm. See Jn. 3:31; 19:11; Jas. 1:17; 3:15, 17. Recall the observation of George Eliot's Mrs. Poyser, that "some men need to be hatched again and hatched different."

8. *The wind bloweth.* Or, *the Spirit breathed*, RVm. The word "Spirit" means both "spirit" and "breath."—*So is every one that is born of the Spirit.* Thus Jesus teaches by his apt comparison that as the wind is a reality and a power even though we can not see it nor direct it, so the

unseen Spirit of God is a Reality and a Power, and the incomprehensible mystery of being "born of the Spirit" is a fact. The inward change, like the power of the wind, is proved by results.

10. *Art thou the teacher of Israel?* Nicodemus was a professional religious teacher: Jesus calls him the teacher either because he was preeminent or because he thought himself preeminent as a teacher.

11. *We speak.* Is this the rhetorical plural, or is it "I and all that believe in me"?

12. *If I told you earthly things.* If I spoke about manifestations of religious truth here on earth, as in telling you about the new birth.—*If I tell you heavenly things.* If Nicodemus could not believe religious truths whose evidence was manifest, how could he believe truth about God of which no visible evidence could be given?

13. *No one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven.* It is said that Persian jugglers can fling a rope up in the sky and then ascend the rope. That impossible feat may be accomplished before man can build a stairway by which to ascend to God. The stairway must be let down from above. "I am the Way," said Jesus: the Son of God became flesh and dwelt among men that he might become the way of men's ascent to God. It has been asked how this statement can be reconciled with that in 2 K. 2:11 in regard to Elijah's translation. Jesus was not thinking of mere translations; he was endeavoring to convince Nicodemus that he had come with a message from God to men; besides, no one "hath ascended into heaven" in such a manner as Christ descended and ascended.—*Who is in heaven.* Many ancient authorities omit these words, R.Vm. They mean that Jesus keeps up his communion with his Heavenly home.

14. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.* See Num. 21:4-9.—*Must.* Because it was God's will.—*Be lifted up.* On the cross first of all, and then into heaven: Jn. 8:28; 12:32, 34. "Holman Hunt paints Jesus in the carpenter's shop: the day's work is over; the spent toiler lifts his arms in an attitude of utter weariness, and the level rays of the setting sun cast upon the wall yonder the shadow of a cross. The suggestion is true: he was born under that shadow and lived under it. He knew that he had come to die."

16. This verse Luther called "The Little Gospel," the Bible in miniature, because it gives in one Whether verses 16-21 were a demus, or were John's comment the crucifixion and eternal life, either case the teaching is that such an extent: the word so is

1 Jn. 4:8.—*The world.*

the Jewish race alone, Pharisees believed.—

gotten Son. Nicodemus of Abraham's readiness

son.—*That whosoever believeth on* assent of the mind to a creed. heart to a person. It means and my friend, and give to him don).—*But have eternal life.* "A that if he could explain the Christian. Then he will never see God can we begin to understand waiting for this, you are like might say, 'I will never study stand it. I will never enter a solve every problem'" (Chap-

17. *To judge the world.* "If dict, Ps. 130:3; hence judg-

For
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That He Gave His
Only Begotten Son,

That
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Perish,
But
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sentence the whole Gospel.

part of Jesus' words to Nico- upon his words in reference to is a question in dispute. In of Jesus.—*So loved.* Loved to emphatic in the Greek. See

See 1 Jn. 2:2. Not as Nicodemus and all He gave his only be- would naturally think to sacrifice his only

him. This does not mean the "It means the assent of the that I trust Jesus as my Savior the devotion of my life" (Gorman once said in my presence atonement, he would become a come to Jesus, for not until we stand the atonement. If you a man in the university who astronomy until I can under- class in mathematics until I can man).

he judges there is but one ver- ment is condemnation."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Came unto him by night.* In Eastern lands they come by night to the missionary, and have long, earnest talks with him upon the subject of his mission. They are especially anxious to find out its political bearingst

and whether there is any hope of a bettering of their political condition. They are too shrewd to commit themselves to any statements which the foreigner might use to their injury, but, being men of more than the average mental power, they talk freely and appreciatively upon the great truths with which the heart of the missionary is filled to overflowing. When, at a late hour, they take their leave, the young, ardent missionary, greatly encouraged, records in his diary his impressions of the interview, and the hope that the truth has at length found a place in the heart of a man of position and influence in society. But in most cases his hopes are doomed to disappointment. It is seldom that a man of that class, however persuaded he may be intellectually of the truth of the message which the missionary brings, has the moral courage to openly avow his convictions, and brave the persecution and reproach with which such an avowal would be met.—Dr. Albert L. Long, in "Sunday School Times."

In Samaria a sheikh said recently to a missionary, "We like your books but we fear to show our desire to the people of this place, and we have to obtain them secretly." The missionary opened his Bible and read the third chapter of John. "Yes," said the sheikh, "we, like Nicodemus, come at night for fear and shame; but the time is near when there will be no fear nor shame, and the night will be as the day."

7. *Ye must be born anew.* The expression used by the Rabbis for the person who underwent a change of heart through repentance and conversion is *beriah hadashah*, a new creation.—Jewish Cyclopaedia.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How did Jesus show his approachableness to the first disciples who sought him? Tell the circumstances under which Paul was born again (a lesson of last year). What was the first prophecy of his death which Jesus made at the time of the clearing of the Temple? What question did the Philippian jailer ask Paul about salvation which is answered in this lesson? (A lesson of last year.) What did Paul tell the Corinthians was the greatest thing in the world? (Another lesson of last year.) What did John the Baptist say about Jesus as the Savior?

The Visit of Nicodemus to Jesus. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." These words of Nicodemus, the proud member of the Sanhedrin, tell the effect which Jesus' miracles and teaching had made upon him. After clearing the Temple Jesus had been doing many miracles in Jerusalem which are not recorded, but they are referred to in Jn. 2.23. The result was that "many believed on his name."

Jesus met this remark of Nicodemus by telling him that a man must be born anew in order to see the Kingdom of God. We must bear in mind that the report of this conversation is doubtless abbreviated, and that between questions and answers given other remarks intervened. Nicodemus had come to Jesus to hear more about his teaching concerning the Kingdom of God, and Jesus told him that he, a proud Jew, must be born anew, in order to understand it. "How?" the astonished man asked. "Of water and the Spirit," Jesus answered.

Nicodemus is known to us as "the man who came to Jesus by night," and many are the sermons against spiritual timidity and cowardice in which he has been severely denounced. Yet there were good reasons for his choosing the night time for his visit. He may have done so from honorable caution: had he gone in the daytime the people would have proclaimed him a disciple of the Nazarene and he was not ready to throw his influence that way, not being himself sure whether he believed in Jesus as the Christ. Then, too, he wished to have an uninterrupted talk with the Great Teacher, and for that Jesus' days were far too crowded. I like to think of this as a prearranged interview, which Jesus was glad to grant a genuine seeker after truth.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." Thus

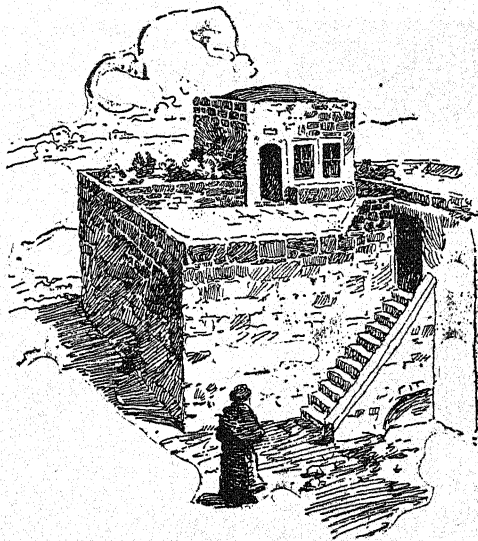
Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, addressed Jesus. Rabbi, Teacher, was the common title by which Jesus was known. He was preeminently the Great Teacher. He taught by his "signs," his life, as well as by his words.

Would you grow in Christian character, would you secure attention, would you know what to teach, would you gain aptitude in imparting that knowledge, would you work wisely toward the great end of leading those in your class to declare themselves openly for Christ—then study, not half-seriously but whole-heartedly, the methods of the Master Teacher.

To the mind of a teacher of young pupils I would recall our lesson of last year about the conversion of Saul, with its thoughts in regard to the different ways of becoming a follower of Christ. Dr. Dunning (in the "Sunday School Times") gives this wise word of caution: "A child is no more responsible for a new birth, as it is theologically defined, than he was for his physical birth. It is his duty to believe on Jesus Christ. It is your duty as his teacher to show him who Christ is and how to believe on him. But the responsibility for the new birth of any soul rests only with God. Jesus used this figure only once, and then to a theological professor, who declared that he could not understand it. Much oftener he used other illustrations to teach the same thing—the way of entrance into the Kingdom of God. (See Mt. 18.3; Mk. 8.34; Lk. 18.22; 10.42.) The substance of his teaching of the new birth is that the world does not need new organization, but new life, and that any one may have this by obeying him."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. After cleansing the temple Jesus spent the remainder of the day among the crowds gathered in the great city, and wrought many miracles of healing. When night came he went to the home of some friend, perhaps to that of John, the writer of the Gospel which we are studying. Long after nightfall Jesus was sitting in the guest chamber on the roof; his room was lighted by an earthen vessel filled with olive oil in which a wick floated; the street was dark, for you know we must not think of the streets of Jerusalem as ablaze with electric lights as ours are; there were not even any street lamps to light the narrow thoroughfares. A man was walking rapidly toward the house where Jesus was. It may be that he had thrown a corner of his mantle over his face so as not to be recognized in the moonlight by the Roman sentinels or the Jews of his acquaintance, for he was an important man in the city, one of its chief rulers, and he may not have wished it known that he was going to visit Jesus, the humble Nazarene, who had already aroused the anger of the chief Jews. Or it may be that Nicodemus, for so this man was called, was not at all ashamed of being seen on this errand, and only came at night because it was the custom among the lawyers to discuss great questions in the cool and quiet night, or because, after seeing and hearing about the wonderful events of the day, he could not wait longer to learn more from the Great Teacher. Nicodemus climbed



A House with an Upper Chamber

the outside stairway which led to the chamber on the roof, and greeted Jesus. Long they talked together, and the learned lawyer was amazed at what Jesus told him.

For Older Pupils. At the World's Sunday School Convention held in Zurich in 1913, Rev. F. B. Meyer asked every one to stand and clasp the hand of his neighbor on either side as he repeated Jn. 3.16 in his own language. It chanced that a Japanese and a Swiss were my neighbors, but the strangeness of their words as they said, "For God so loved the world," and of all the Babel of languages in the Tonhalle was overpowered by the realization that we were all one in Christ Jesus, and that it is the *world* which Jesus came to save. To whom were these beautiful words first spoken?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I YE MUST BE BORN ANEW

Why Jesus Told Nicodemus that a Great Change Must Take Place in Him. Here is the Life in contact with the icy legalism of the day. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and his piety was cold and mechanical. Religion had become a bloodless obedience to lifeless rules. Men cared more about being proper than about being holy. Modes were emphasized more than moods. An external pose was esteemed more highly than an internal disposition. The popular saint lived on "the outsides of things."

Then came the Life. And what will he say to the externalist? "Ye must be born again." Nothing else could he have said. If the mechanical is to become the vital there is nothing for it but a new birth. To get from the outside into the inside of things, from the letter to the spirit, we need the miracle of renewal, the recreating ministry of grace.

And so it is today. The ritualistic is vitalized by the evangelistic. If the mechanical is to become the spontaneous, there is need of the "well of living water, springing up into eternal life." When we are born again, ritual becomes a helpful trellis for the spiritual flowers; the outward form becomes the helpmeet of redeeming grace.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "My Daily Meditation."

The Philosophy of the Fact of the New Birth. "How?" Nicodemus understood perfectly well how a man might be schooled into a theologian, and he understood perfectly well how a man might be disciplined into an ecclesiastic. That is intelligible. But that the Spirit of God should stir the depths of a man's nature, that it should give him a new heart and a right soul—when the Master came to that, the Rabbi cried, "How?"

And yet, what about the fact? Why, I can find you today a thousand men and women who can testify that their conversion was the greatest and most glorious fact in their history. Some of your most learned men testify to it. The man in the street, who is an equal authority on spiritual things, testifies to the same fact.

You may not follow the philosophy of this doctrine of conversion, but there is no mistake about the fact. Don't say, "How?" and stand outside spiritual religion because you cannot comprehend its mystery. As Luther says, "Crucify the 'how'!" Taste and see—you don't see first and then taste—taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Believe in the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. Rest all your sins upon the infinite compassion and know by blessed experience that God can raise you from the depths of sin to the rock of righteousness; that he can turn your energies into purer channels; that he can make of you, who have been like a wild thorn in the wilderness, a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord!—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

When Comes the Supreme Meeting of Your Soul and God? In the religion of our day, conversion is made a less prominent and separate moment in a man's life than it used to be considered in the religion of other days. If this change means that all the life is recognized as being more full of God, and so lifted up nearer to the level of the conversion-hour, then it is well; but if it means that the supernatural power of the conversion itself is being disallowed, and so the whole life brought down to the level of every-day worldliness, then it is bad.

All Christian experience bears witness that there are times when that Savior who is always present and always seeking us makes himself peculiarly manifest to our souls and asks us to be his. It may be in connection with some great outward change that comes to us; or it may be something wholly of the inner life, unseen, unheard by any one besides ourselves; but do you not know that such times surely come? I speak to any servant of the Savior here: Were there not days, perhaps years, when you went on in your own way, Christ by you always but you not seeing him, Christ speaking to you but you not hearing him? But at last there came a time when he looked on you with a new face and you did see him; when he spoke to you with a new voice and you did hear him! That is the time—be it a moment or a day or a year—of a man's conversion—the beginning of a new life.

And now, can you not see that it makes a great difference whether that supreme meeting of your soul and God, which must come and which is fraught with such stupendous consequences, is to come at some fixed time, when you have reached some special age, when you are ready for some special study; or, on the other hand, whether it may come at any moment—at *any moment* between the solemn moment when you first find that you have a soul and that other solemn moment when you give your soul up to your Master and your Judge? If the first, then you may wait, wait unexpectedly until you hear him coming. If the other, then any time in the ever-turning journey of life may bring you in sight of him; any sound close by your side may be his footstep. This next moment may be his moment to bless your soul. Nay, this moment, *now*, may be his time, and you may be letting it pass just because you are not knowing that it may be any moment, and so are not listening every moment for the slightest indication of his coming.—Phillips Brooks, in "The Law of Growth."

II GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

God's Wonderful Love. John 3.16 is probably the best loved of all the verses in the Bible. "To every one it is something; to some it is everything." A Japanese has called it "the Fujiyama text of the Bible," meaning that it is the great background of all other truths of the Bible, even as the beautiful mountain of Fujiyama is in the background of nearly all Japanese pictures.

Henry Drummond tells of sailing along the coast of Africa in company with four passengers who spoke different languages. They tried to talk by means of signs, and finally each one took out his Bible and, as if by instinct, turned to one passage and their fingers pointed to John 3.16. These men of different nationalities had found their common Father and common brotherhood.

The figure 8 represents only eight units, but when it is given a new position (∞) it represents infinity. Does the word *love* as applied to our affection for God represent so little to us that we fail to realize its infinitude of meaning when viewed in its other relation to God's love to us?

It Was Just Like Him. In oriental lands where kings are cruel tyrants God is thought of as only another and greater tyrant, cruel and pitiless, to be appeased by human tortures, to be delighted by the passing of little children through the fire. The revelation of the true nature of God had been made gradually to his chosen people in Palestine, but before the coming of Jesus they had not realized that he is a God of infinite love and tender mercy. It was Jesus who taught his disciples to pray "Our Father who art in heaven." It was Jesus' teaching that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

To an aged colored woman some one said, "Isn't it wonderful that God should give his only Son to die for us?" "No," came her happy answer, "it is just like him." God is not a mighty king ruling his subjects with rod of iron and unmindful of their needs; he is love itself, and the giving of his only Son to suffer and die for the sins of the world was "just like him," for as his love is infinite, so is his capacity for sacrifice.

What We Owe God. The story about the little girl who found on a piece of paper the words, "For God so loved the world that he gave," though well-known, will bear repeating here. The rest of the verse was

lacking, but when she was asked the reason for her happy looks she produced the torn paper and said: "I don't know what God gave, but if he loved the world so much that he gave anything, it must make us all happy."

God Loves Sinners Also. Dwight L. Moody met Henry Moorhouse, the English evangelist, in Dublin. Moody was not much impressed with Moorhouse, thinking him too young for the work he was doing, and when the latter expressed a wish to come to Chicago and preach Moody merely said, "If you happen to come West, call on me." Soon Moody received a letter from Moorhouse saying that he would be in Chicago on a certain date and would preach for him. Though considerably disturbed, Moody arranged for the sermon during his absence.

On his return home Mrs. Moody told her husband that the whole community was stirred by the young English preacher. "His preaching is a little different from yours," she added; "he tells the worst sinners that God loves them, and he backs up everything he says from the Bible. He has preached twice from Jn. 3.16."

Surprised and curious, Moody went to the Sunday-morning meeting, when Moorhouse again preached from the same text, "guiding his audience on a sort of tour through the Bible to learn how 'God loved the world.'" Once more on the following night Moorhouse preached on Jn. 3.16, when, said Moody:

"He showed us, along another line, from Genesis to Revelation, that God loved us. He could turn to almost any part of the Bible and prove this. Well, I thought that this was a better address than the other; he struck a higher note than ever, and it was sweet to my soul to hear it. He just beat the truth down into my heart, and I have never doubted it since. I used to preach that God was behind the sinner, with a double-edged sword, ready to hew him down. I am through with that. I preach now that God is behind him with love, and that he is running away from the God of love."

III THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

Because God so Loved the World. Men have tried to solve the Atonement by the multiplication table and philosophy, whereas the Atonement of Christ is the great heart of the Almighty beating with love and compassion for men; and to attempt to reduce it to any theory is simply presumptuous and hopeless.—Dr. Alexander McKenzie.

I Believe and Accept the Atonement. I do not understand the Atonement, and it is not necessary that I should. But I believe and accept it, and that makes it operative for me. The man who has the most perfect and satisfactory theory of the Atonement—fair to God and just to man—is not saved by his theory, but by his faith in God's love, and the yielding of his will to it. All the laws of God's universe need obedience, not understanding, to unlock their power for us. Be obedient to the law, and you get its results.—Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

If We Miss Salvation! Few things in life are more painful than to look back and recall the great opportunities we neglected, the great things we missed.

But to miss the one grand object of life! This is the dire catastrophe we have most to fear. Perhaps we sometimes exaggerate the importance of the chances we ignored, the value of things we threw away (the fish that escapes the angler is always the biggest), but we cannot exaggerate the importance of the grace and salvation that make a success of this life and the next. If we ignore the blessings that are now freely given to us of God, we inflict upon ourselves a loss for which there is no remedy.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in "The Gates of Dawn."

Are We Helping to Give This Message of God to the World? "I sent my love to you every day," said a little girl indignantly, to a sick friend who was beginning to be convalescent, and felt hurt because no word of remembrance had come to her. "They just took it, and kept it all themselves!" The childish way of looking at it sets in strong light the meaning of an undelivered message. Was it chance that just at the moment of hearing it there fell into our hands an article in one of the magazines in which the writer—a missionary—made a passionate plea for men and women to come and tell the story of a Savior's love for sinners? "O, the people! the people," she wrote earnestly, as if overwhelmed by the thought

of their numbers and their need. "They are so dark and ignorant and lonely. Come and tell them that Christ loves them." Christ sends his love to them with each returning day—sends it by us. Do we deliver it? Or do we take it and keep it all ourselves? What does he think of us as messengers?—Authorship unknown.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 16. God's love is not rounded out until I respond to it.—Dr. M. D. Babcock.

Verse 16. In creation God shows us his hand, but in redemption God gives us his heart.—Adolph Monod.

Verse 16. If the only begotten Son were not equal to the Father, the gift would be less than the measure of Divine love.—George Reith.

Verse 16.

Hast thou sinned?

There is a Sacrifice. Lift up your head;
The lowly world, and the over-world alike,
Ring with a song, a happy rede,
"Thy Father loves thee."

—Jean Ingelow.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"For God so loved the world—that is inclusive enough. That he gave his only Son—that is provision enough for me. That whosoever believeth in him—that is definite enough for me. Should not perish—O God, I now accept this statement of thine as the truth, I will hold to it while I live."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The new birth. See Chapter XII of Phillips Brooks' "Seeking Life"; Chapter VIII of J. Wilbur Chapman's "Regeneration"; Chapter X of Henry Drummond's "The Ideal Life"; Chapter VII of Clark's "The Christ from Without and Within."

2. The purpose of John's Gospel. See pages 26 and 27 of our Introduction.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was John the Baptist's final testimony to Jesus? (Jn. 3.24-30.) 2. Describe the scene from Jacob's Well. (*Guide*, p. 89.) 3. Who were the Samaritans? (2 K. 17.24-41; *Guide*, p. 87.) 4. What did the Jews refuse the Samaritans that caused the latter to hate them? (Ezra 4.) 5. Why did the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans? (*Guide*, p. 87.) 6. When did the Jews call Jesus a Samaritan, and what did they mean thereby? (Jn. 8.48.) 7. Is there still enmity between Jews and Samaritans? (*Guide*, p. 88.) 8. How did Jesus twice hold up a Samaritan's example as worthy of emulation? (Lk. 10.25-37; 17.11-19.) 9. Why was the woman astonished at being addressed by Jesus? (Verse 27 and *Guide*, p. 86.) 10. Describe the scene of drawing water at a well. (*Guide*, p. 87.) 11. Give the whole conversation between Jesus and the woman. 12. What event recorded in Deuteronomy made the Samaritans regard their Mount of Gerizim as sacred? (Dt. 27.11, 12.) 13. What led Jesus to stay two days in Samaria, and what was the result? 14. What does the Gospel of John give which the Synoptic Gospels omit? (*Guide*, p. 27.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Jesus leave Judea? (*Guide*, p. 87.) 2. What is the force of "thus" in verse 6? 3. By what little observations does John show us the humanity of Jesus? 4. How could Jesus say salvation was for the Jews? (*Guide*, p. 85.) 5. In what parable does a man of Samaria appear to better advantage than do Jews? 6. What does it mean to worship God in spirit and in truth? 7. Is it right to despise any people because they do not belong to our own race? 8. How would Jesus regard the feeling which some Americans have for the foreigners in their land?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize verses 13, 14 and 24.

In your Note-Book write "V. Jesus and Nicodemus."

JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

Golden Text

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.
1 Timothy 1:15

LESSON John 4:1-29: verses 5-14, 24-26 printed
MEMORIZE verses 13, 14

5 So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: 6 And Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food. 9 The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; whence then hast thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle? 13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. 25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Meeting with Jesus, 1-26.
- II. Marveling at Jesus, 27-38.
- III. Missioning for Jesus, 39-42.

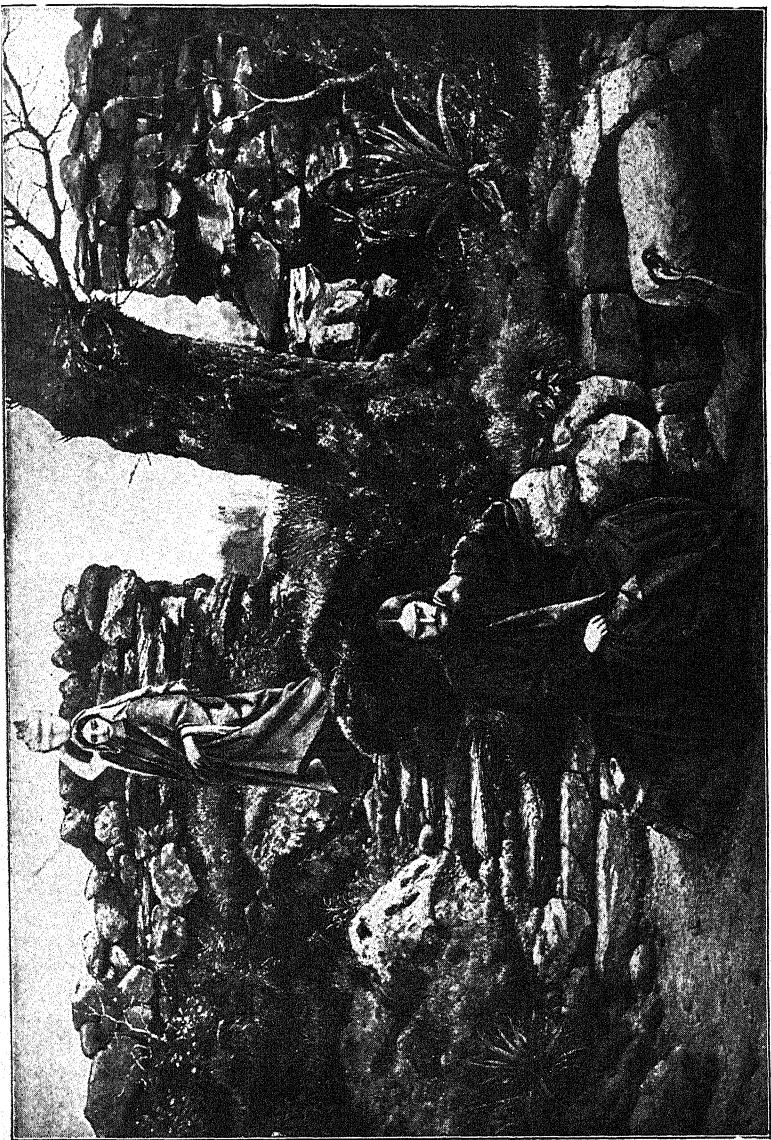
5. *Near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.* Compare Gen. 33:19; 34:25; 48:22; Josh. 24:32.

6. *Thus. Or, as he was,* RVm. "What meaneth 'thus'? Not on a throne, not on a cushion, but simply, and as he was, on the ground" (Chrysostom).—*About the sixth hour.* About noon. See ¶2, p. 61.

7. *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water.* See Light from Oriental Life. Most commonplace events are but milestones that mark our progress along the road we are travelling, but some are turning points which send us in another direction: such a turning point was this errand for this woman.

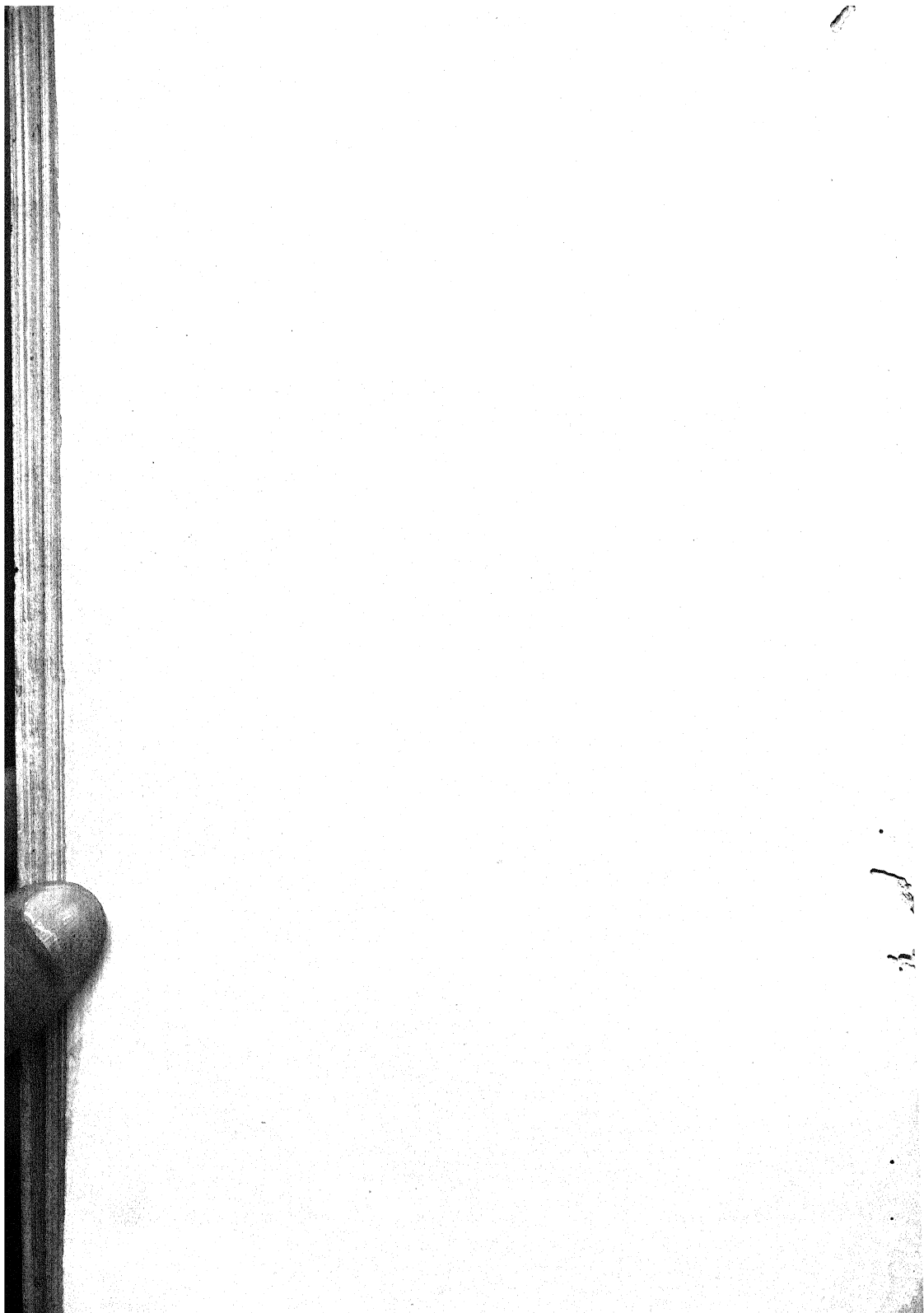
9. *The Samaritan woman saith.* Her surprise may be shown by emphasizing *thou* and *a Jew*, and *me* and *a Samaritan woman*.—*For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.* Some ancient authorities omit this statement, RVm. In the time of Christ it was permissible to partake of their food (Verse 8), but no Jew would ask a favor of them. See p. 86.

10. *If thou knewest.* "If you knew what God's blessings are, and how freely he gives them, if you knew that he who speaks to you has them all in his power to give, you would be the seeker then, and he would not refuse you, he would give you living water." Note his yearning tenderness.—*The gift of God and who it is that saith to thee.* Jesus is God's greatest Gift, and he is the Giver of God's blessings.—*He would have given*



JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

From a Painting by Wm. Dyce



thee living water. He would have satisfied her thirst of soul. Living water in the literal sense means spring water, not cistern water. See Jn. 7:38.

11. The woman interprets his words literally.

12. *Our father Jacob.* Jews refused to acknowledge any kinship with Samaritans. See p. 88.—*And drank thereof himself.* What is good enough for our father Jacob is good enough for us, is her meaning.

13. *Shall thirst again.* "The woman's daily drawing from this well is a parable, speaking of her own poor, vain, sinful life. She knew, as every sinner knows, what it is to thirst again, and thirst more insatiately than ever, after drinking of this water" (Dr. Reith).

14. *Whosoever.* How free the grace!—*Of the water that I shall give him.* "What a price in suffering and sacrifice the pilgrim must pay for the water of the Ganges! Every blessing in Christ is ours for a look, a sigh, a breath!" (Watkinson).—*Shall never thirst.* How effectual the gift! Thus under a figure of speech rather than by a declaration of doctrine Jesus, taught that when one is "born anew" he finds perfect satisfaction.—*Shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.* "He is himself the Spring—being in communion with Christ, and the spring has no thirst" (Bengel). "The Atlantic Ocean is little affected by a river which feeds it or by a waterspout which drains it: the wide, deep, glorious sea keeps about the same high-water mark with fine indifference. And it is much the same with a believer who lives in the enjoyment of the love of God; he knows a rich contentment and blessedness to which the world adds little and from which it can take little away" (Watkinson).

15-23. The woman, now thoroughly aroused, though she did not comprehend the nature of this water which Jesus offered, acknowledged that she wanted it. She wished to be saved the trouble of coming "all the way hither to draw." We have here, as Dr. Jowett reminds us, a weary woman and a weary Lord. "But the Lord was only weary in body; the woman was dry and exhausted in soul. Her heart was like some charred chamber after a destructive fire. All its furniture was injured, and some of it was almost burnt away. For sin had been blazing in the secret place, and had scorched the delicacies of the spirit, and the inward satisfaction was gone. And now she was very weary, and her daily walk had become a most tiresome march." But the water of life is not to be had for the mere nonchalant asking; it must be thirsted for. To change the woman's sense of physical wretchedness into a sense of sin and spiritual need, Jesus bade her bring her husband, and she replied that she had no husband. "Thou hast well said," Jesus observed; "for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." This knowledge of her life convinced the woman that Jesus was a prophet. Dexterously she sought to turn the conversation from her own guilt by pointing to Mount Gerizim and asking him as a prophet to solve the long-standing dispute between the Samaritans and Jews in regard to the right place in which to worship. To this woman Jesus then made one of his greatest pronouncements, one that swept away the bigotry of centuries. The local institutions of the old covenant were passing away, for the new and universal one was at hand. Neither there on Mount Gerizim nor yet at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah alone shall one worship; for God may be worshiped anywhere. It matters not where God is worshiped, but it matters much that his Divine nature is understood, and that he is worshiped in the right way. The Samaritans knew little about the God whom they worshiped; the Jews had received a fuller revelation, and therefore through them the promised salvation must come.

24. *God is a Spirit.* Or, *God is Spirit*, RVm. This is the best of all descriptions of God. "Very slowly do we learn this. Take, for example, the appearances and voices by which intimations were made to godly men in Old Testament times. Why are many people reluctant to allow that these manifestations were inward and to conscience, that they came as convictions wrought by an unseen Power, rather than as outward appearances or audible voices? Is it not because the truth that God is a Spirit is not adequately apprehended?" (Marcus Dods).

25. *I know that Messiah cometh.* The woman was perplexed by words which she but dimly comprehended, and she observed that there was a

final authority; the Messiah was coming and he would declare all things.—*He that is called Christ.* This phrase is put in parentheses in the RV to indicate that it is an explanation added by the Evangelist.—*When he is come.* It will be time enough to discuss spiritual worship when that far distant day comes, is her meaning.

26. *I that speak unto thee am he.* Compare Mt. 16.20; 17.9; Mk. 8.30. Jesus could openly declare to this Samaritan woman what he would not to the Jews, because they would seek to make him king, Jn. 6.15. Characteristic of John's Gospel are the dialogues of Jesus in which he reveals great spiritual truths to one hearer. See our Introduction, p. 24.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

9. *For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.* When a Jew wished to express his utmost hatred of another, he called him a Samaritan. "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a demon?" said they to Christ. The feeling still exists in Palestine. When Dr. Trumbull told a Jewish lady at Nablus, near Jacob's well, that he had visited the Samaritan community that morning, she shrank away from him exclaiming, "Take a purifying bath." There is a tradition that three hundred priests with their trumpets and three hundred rabbis with their scholars once gathered in the temple court to curse the Samaritans with all the cursings in the law of Moses. Nor were the Samaritans less intense in their hatred of the Jews, nor less eager to annoy them. At the passover season it was the custom of the Jews, by lighting bonfires on the Mount of Olives which was the signal for other bonfires from hill to hill till the Euphrates was reached, to send to the Jews in exile the message that it was passover time at home and they were not forgotten. The Samaritans, like spiteful children, lighted rival bonfires on other days so as to confuse the watchers in the East.

Today the Mohammedan "has no dealing" with the Hindoo. In the British camps of Eastern troops during the great war there were always three kitchens: Mohammedan kitchens, kitchens for meat-eating Hindoos, and kitchens for Brahmins and vegetarians. As the two religions differ in the way animals are killed, each had its own butchers and slaughter-houses.

10. *The gift of God . . . living water.* The water-carriers in Jerusalem today call attention to their spring water by crying, "The gift of God! The gift of God!"

20. *Ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* The Jewish idea of the Church of the future we are not ignorant of. They believed that all other nations should literally bow themselves down and become disciples of the Jews, and be received by adoption into the Jewish church, so that in the end all the people on the globe should be members of the Jewish economy; and they believed that the temple in Jerusalem would be to all races of men in the world what it was to them. They believed that pilgrimages would always be made to Jerusalem and that the temple-worship would remain to the end of time.—Henry Ward Beecher.

27. *They marvelled that he was speaking with a woman.* It was thought beneath the dignity of a rabbi to talk with a woman about questions of law. "Rather burn the sayings of the law than teach them to women," was the rabbinical advice. One of the six things which a rabbi might not do was to "converse with a woman on the street, even his own wife." "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast not made me a woman," was the exclamation often heard.

Jesus was the great defender of woman. It was his tender, respectful treatment of her—his lifting her to companionship and discipleship, that resulted in her attaining her present position. "You, however, cannot appreciate the magnitude of this revolution unless you recall the condition of the world and the obstacles with which the Savior had to contend at that time. At that very time and in the Jewish nation itself woman was a thing. Polygamy was universal under the head of successive divorce, and woman was degraded. Rome swayed her mighty scepter over the fairest portions of the world, but under its splendid civilization woman was not esteemed an individual; her individuality was not recognized. No voice had she in the government of the family; the father was the sole authority. He claimed the children. He had supreme control over

her property; by marriage she lost all family rights, and could bequeath nothing. She married a master who had power over her life. At her trial he was the presiding judge. Such was Roman jurisprudence touching woman, and yet Christ in the very presence of the Roman proconsul of Palestine, the representative of the Cæsars, dared to inaugurate this great revolution.

15. *Neither come all the way hither to draw.* Drawing water in the East is woman's work. Regularly the women and girls go to the fountain or well which is often a long way from the town or village. Even now the people of Palestine call the early evening "The time when women go out to draw water." The water is brought in earthenware jars carried on the head or in water-skins slung on the back by a band passing around the forehead. You read the proof of the drudgery, as Dr. George Adam Smith observes, on the well itself, where the soft ropes dragged daily through the centuries have cut deep into the stone; and again on the lined faces of the daughters of the people as they gather to their task. The tramp to the well, the frequent quarrel for one's turn, the strain to lift the bucket from the deep pool, the climb again with the high, full jar on the head—it is all a constant weariness, borne by little girls as well as by women.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Why was it that Philip "must needs go" toward Gaza? (A lesson of last year.) For what purpose does John introduce his explanatory remarks? What notable conversation between Jesus and an individual have we studied? Was Jesus interested in Nicodemus because the latter was a great man among the Jews? Who may be saved, according to John 3:16? Does this mean only the people of some special nation? How was Peter taught that God is no respecter of persons? (Lesson of last year.)

John the Baptist's Final Testimony to Jesus. From Jerusalem Jesus and his disciples went into the country districts of Judea, and the disciples baptized those who came to them. The disciples of John the Baptist were jealous of their master's fame, and they came to him with the news that the crowds which hitherto had flocked to him were now thronging to Jesus. But there was no jealousy in John's great heart, and gladly, even triumphantly, he declared: "This my joy therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease."

On the Way to Galilee. Several months were spent in Judea, and then Jesus and his disciples left that province for Galilee. Usually the Jews crossed the Jordan twice, going through Perea east of that river in order to avoid passing through Samaritan territory. Jesus, however, "must needs go through Samaria," John observes. Was the impelling motive the desire to bring to the Samaritans his good news that he was the Savior, not of the Jews only, but of the whole world?

Who the Samaritans Were, and how Hatred Arose between Them and the Jews. After the Assyrians conquered Samaria, the Israelite inhabitants were taken to Babylonia, and colonists were brought from Babylonia to occupy their place in Samaria. At the time of Christ, the Jews regarded the Samaritans as of purely heathen origin, descendants of those Babylonians, but the Samaritans claimed that not all the Jews had been driven from



Going to and Returning from the Fountain in
Palestine Today

Samaria at the Captivity, and that through intermarriage there was in their veins an admixture of Jewish blood, of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

The Babylonians on their settlement in Samaria found the land overrun by lions and other wild beasts, and they besought the Assyrian king Esar-haddon to send them an Israelitish priest to teach them how to worship the God of the land, for this affliction had come upon them through their failure to worship him. This request was granted. When the Jews began to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem the Samaritans wished to share in the work. "Let us build with you," they said, "for we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon." The Jews refused their offer of help, and then began the enmity between the two peoples which was intensified when the Samaritans built their rival temple on Mount Gerizim. (Ezra 4; Nehemiah 4.)

Samaritans of Today. Some two hundred Samaritans are now living at Babelus, the ancient Shechem. The temple built on Gerizim was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in the second century B. C., but the Samaritans have continued to worship on its site, and here they annually celebrate the Passover. They claim that Mount Gerizim was the scene of the intended sacrifice of Isaac. In their copy of the Pentateuch, where it says that "God will choose a spot" (Dt. 12:14; 18:6, and elsewhere), they read "God has chosen a spot," that is, Gerizim, and the tenth commandment both in Exodus and Deuteronomy is followed in their copy by a command to erect an altar on Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans are very poor, and the World's Sunday School Association has undertaken the work of educating the boys.

Jesus' Conversations with Nicodemus and with the Woman of Samaria. These two conversations, given in the third and fourth chapters of John's Gospel, were meant to be laid side by side. The contrasts are remarkable. "We have the difference in character and position of Nicodemus and this woman, the difference in Jesus' way of dealing with them; to the former, shutting the kingdom, to the latter opening it, making the one feel that no personal merit gave a right to the kingdom, and making the other feel that the greatest personal demerit did not exclude. We see how Jesus draws every type of character, and can set forth the truth so as to gain each—the respectable Pharisee and the depraved woman; how all who enter the kingdom are made to perceive that 'by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.'" "The Sequel of the Story. The return of the disciples broke off the conversation. They marveled that their Master had been speaking with a woman, but reverence for him restrained them from questions. The woman forgot her errand at the well, and, leaving her waterpot there, hastened on to the city to tell the good news. Meanwhile the disciples urged Jesus to eat, but Jesus told them that his meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to accomplish his work. Then he bade them lift up their eyes and see that the fields were white already unto the harvest, referring thus to his work of garnering souls. That harvest was indeed ready for gathering, for many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the woman who testified, "He told me all things that ever I did." They came and besought him to abide with them. After two days among them he had the joy of knowing that many more believed, not because of what the woman had said, but because they had heard for themselves and knew that "This is indeed the Savior of the world."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Political Divisions of Palestine. When Jesus was born, Herod the Great, who had ruled all Palestine under the Romans, was drawing near the close of his long reign. He died a few months later, and his kingdom was divided among his sons.

Archelaus received Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, west of the Dead Sea and the Lower Jordan, and was given the title of ethnarch. He was deposed by Rome in A.D. 6, and his territory was made an imperial province ruled by procurators appointed from among the Roman knights. But little is known about these procurators till Pontius Pilate, the fifth procurator, was appointed in A.D. 26. He held his office till deposed in A.D. 36, and then he committed suicide.

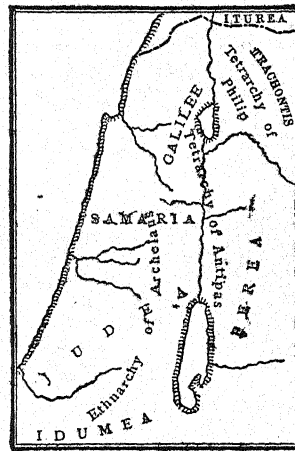
To Herod Antipas was given Galilee west of the Jordan and north of Samaria, and Perea east of the Lower Jordan and Dead Sea, with the title of tetrarch. He reigned till after the death of Jesus, and was deposed about the year 39.

Philip, the best of the sons of Herod the Great, was made tetrarch of the country north and east of the Sea of Galilee. He, too, reigned throughout the life of Jesus, and died in A.D. 34.

The political divisions of Palestine during the life of Jesus were, therefore, (1) Judea and Samaria under the rule of Roman procurators; (2) Galilee and Perea under Herod Antipas; and (3) small principalities east of Galilee and north of Perea, under the rule of Philip.

Assign paragraphs 72-76, 85, 87 of "In the Master's Country," and direct your pupils to indicate on a map, p. 33, the political divisions and the rulers as shown in the little map here.

The Scene of Our Lesson. The chief city of Samaria was Shechem. Two miles east of Shechem was Sychar. Between the two was Jacob's Well. This is one of the most beautiful and most satisfactory spots of all Palestine today. It is beautiful because the valley of Shechem extends westward with its gray olive trees and its springs and gardens, Mount Ebal towering above it on the north and Mount Gerizim on the south, while southward are the hills that surround Jerusalem, and eastward the hills that skirt the Jordan, and in the far distant north is the snowy summit of Hermon. It is satisfactory because it is one of the few sites about which there is no shadow of doubt as to their genuineness. The well is no longer by the wayside, however, for a Greek Church has been built above it. We had to wait long before we could drink of its water, for two monks were chanting the service which is held there daily.



Political Divisions of Palestine in the Time of Christ

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

For a study of the great Teacher's methods in winning to himself a careless, indifferent soul no better text could be selected than the one which is our lesson theme. Ponder it thoughtfully.

Note that first Jesus asked a favor of the woman. One who does something for another becomes interested in that other; in no better way can a teacher win the regard of his pupils, and that regard is essential in order to win them for Christ.

Next Jesus awakened the woman's curiosity. Her thoughts were far away from the things of God, but he led them surely thitherward through the gateway of interest opened by curiosity. "If thou knewest." She did not know, but she was thoroughly aroused, and questioned his claim to being greater than "our father Jacob."

Skilfully then Jesus aroused her craving for something better (verse 15). It was not a very noble craving, for it had to do with her self-interest, but "it is a point gained to feel the desirableness of Christ even at the circumference of life's interests."

Tactfully now Jesus aroused her sense of sin. He knew "all that she ever had done," but he dealt gently with her. Dropping all figurative language, by question and statement of fact he convicted her of sin, and led her to a tacit confession of her guilt (verse 19).

Then, when like all other guilty souls, she sought to turn the conversation away from her own life, Jesus answered her evasive question in such a way as to bring her face to face with the issue before her.

"Have you ever seen a clever botanist take a bud and quietly open it and fold back covering and petals until he showed you the heart of the flower that was to be? Have you ever seen a clever teacher win a child

out of shyness into curiosity, and lead curiosity into higher and higher forms of interest until a talk that began about something of no importance ends by being a talk about God?"

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Begin with the geographical setting of the lesson.

For Older Pupils. You would hardly call it a promising situation. The two principal figures in the scene stood too far apart. He was a man, and she was a woman—and in the orient that means a gulf fixed. His disciples marveled that he talked with a woman in a public place. He was a Jew, she was a Samaritan—and the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Race prejudice and religious bigotry had dug a yet deeper gulf. He was the sinless Son of God, she was a woman openly immoral, living at that hour with a man who was not her husband. Her own wrongdoing but widened that gulf into a chasm of separation.

The only thing they seemed to have in common was the fact that they were both thirsty. The Master began on that narrow bit of common ground. When he saw the woman filling her water-pot he said to her courteously, "Give me a drink."—Charles Reynolds Brown, in "The Quest of Life."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I CASTE

The Untouchables. The Jews have a story that at the beginning of human history God offered his law to seventy nations, one after the other, but they all refused it until he came to Israel. Because Israel accepted it, she has been God's favorite nation ever since. In the Jewish prayer-book these words occur in the collect to be repeated at the close of the Jewish Sabbath day: "Thou hast favored us with the knowledge of thy law, and hast taught us to perform the statutes of thy will, thou hast made a distinction, O Lord our God, *between Israel and other nations.*" This sense of special superiority and privilege made the Jews regard the Samaritans with great contempt. See page 87.

In India the religion of one hundred and fifty or more millions of Brahmanic Hindus consists chiefly of eating and drinking and living according to the rules for the separate castes. Their privileged castes treat with the utmost contempt those of the lowest caste. There are over sixty million outcasts called "M'lecha," "the untouchables." They are "untouchable" because a high caste man who should come into physical contact with one of them would be "polluted." To this lowest caste belong the farm laborers, the workers in leather, and all unskilled workers. Should even the shadow of "an untouchable" fall upon a Brahman's food, the food would immediately be flung away.

Caste in Our Land. Ray Stannard Baker refers to the segregation in this country of Negroes and Chinese. Negroes crowd into "colored quarters" in the cities. More and more they are becoming a people wholly apart, separate in their churches, schools, cars, conveyances, hotels, restaurants, with separate professional men. In short, we discover tendencies in this country towards the development of a caste system.

An English periodical refers to the caste-spirit in University circles and at the Chicago Institute of Arts, where the very "models" struck because negro students were admitted, and observes: "On our side of the sea, this position is difficult to appreciate. The gospel that opened the eyes of the eunuch of Ethiopia can alone raze these pitiful barriers to the ground."

Where a Deep Sympathy Takes the Place of Race Antagonism. Teachers, students, missionaries, respect and love the people among whom they live and for whom they work. It is a significant and beautiful truth that, as a rule, the missionaries in the Far East are partisans of the people whom they are trying to serve. The Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Indians, have no more devoted friends and lovers than the missionaries.

It is also a beautiful and significant fact that settlement workers among the different races, as a rule, love the races with whom they are living. Those who are working in an Italian neighborhood will tell you that no people are so attractive and charming as the Italians; those who are working among the Armenians point out the ancient virtues and the modern

attractiveness of one of the oldest races; while those who are teaching and working among the Jewish populations of the city will tell you that no children are half so responsive, no people so grateful, as the Jews.

And these statements are all true. It is impossible to live with a people and work for them without coming to have a great affection for them. You cannot give the best to others without getting the best from them.—"The Outlook."

II THE FALLEN

Christ's Attitude toward the Fallen. He saw no reason in the evil past for despair. He believed it possible for great offenders permanently to forsake wicked ways and rise to great heights of sanctity. He even expected such, once changed, to rise highest. Therefore it was that he spent so much of his time among the outcast. He expected to find there the best citizens of the kingdom. The motto, "Much forgiveness, much love," was part of his apology for his sympathetic relations with the class of which the woman "who was a sinner" was a sample. The confidence he expressed in her case was not the result of a momentary generous impulse. It embodied a fixed principle on which he acted all through his ministry. "It is faith that saves, it can save the lowest, it can save them most conspicuously,"—such was the cheering, hopeful creed of Jesus Christ.—Alexander B. Bruce, in "The Kingdom of God."

Follow Christ's Method. The warders appointed in prisons should be men who can love and pity. They should be people who go into the prison, not to earn a living, but to seek and save the lost, people who are convinced that the guiltiest can yet be brought back and the most defiled can be made clean. It is the only way to deal with criminals, it is the only way to save the lost. We shall never do it by prisons nor by punishments, but by Christ and Christ's methods.

And remember that this method applies not only to the criminal class, but to the world-hardened people absorbed in business, money-making and pleasure—the method applies to them all. That is the way to deal with the rich man, just as that is the way to deal with the criminal who has been sent to prison. It is also the way to deal with everybody. It is the only way to deal with them—Christ's way. Go for the good that is in each person, and if there is no good in him go for the best there is—there may be just a little that you did not know at first. Get hold of that, though it be but one gentle thought in a character that is really brutal and selfish. Though it be but one touch of a noble spirit in a person who is essentially mean and common and unclean, go for that. On that single touch of good, build; elicit it; you will be surprised how it grows. There is no limit to dealing with people on those lines—Christ's way. It works wonders, transforming wonders, miracles, wherever it is tried.—Condensed from "Springs of Joy," by Dr. R. F. Horton.

Brought Back to God. Dr. Len Broughton has told a pathetic and yet beautiful story about a girl who at one time was a teacher in his Sunday-school and a member of the church choir. One Sunday morning when he came to church he found a group of deacons much distressed and talking earnestly. When asked what was the trouble, they said, "About Molly!" It seemed she had gone wrong, and they strongly advised Dr. Broughton not to go near her. He said, "I shall not take your advice—never! Sooner than do that I should ask you to accept my resignation." He visited the house, saw the girl and her mother, and he told her that as she had always been in his affection, so she should continue to be. Two years later, while preaching, he saw Molly come into the church dressed in deepest mourning, for she had lost her mother. Though it was Sunday morning, he felt strangely moved to make a call for penitents to come forward. Crying, and with her arms upraised, Molly came down the aisle saying, "God has forgiven me, I know, and I want you to!" Dr. Broughton came down from his pulpit, took her by the hand, and led her into the front seat. While he was doing that he heard a noise behind him in the choir, and said to himself, "They can't stand that, and they're just going out by the side door." But this was not so. All the women of the choir, led by the chief singer, who had so often stood at Molly's side in happy bygone days, filed before her, and one by one kissed her cheek as a token of

their forgiveness and their love. "Thank God," she said, "they have literally kissed fallen lips back to God." She is now one of the chief rescue workers in the Southern States, and she has dedicated her voice again to God.

III THE WATER OF LIFE

The Meaning of the Imagery. In a country like Palestine where the want of water was often experienced, this imagery of the water of life was a very natural one. What Jesus said to the Samaritan woman he publicly proclaimed at the Feast of the Tabernacle, Jn. 7:37-39: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," said Jesus in the Beatitudes. "He that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely," are the words of the last chapter of the last book of the Bible.

Is your heart thirsty? "If your thirst is for love, for companionship, for all that is needed for life and godliness, though you have a thirst which no thing or person in the world can quench, if you come to Jesus Christ he will satisfy you. You do not try to *feel* that water satisfies you: you drink, and pursue your way, and you are satisfied. Similarly, in dealing with Christ, open your nature to him, and say, 'I take thee to fill this void, to quench this desire.' Wait before him and then go forth and dare to reckon that Jesus Christ has done what he promised. As you dare to trust him, according to your faith it shall be done."

A Draught is Often Needed. On the rocks by the seashore I have seen marine creatures living when the tide was out; not in the briny pool it leaves, but on the dry and naked rock—in the withering air—in the burning, broiling sun. They lived because, when twice each day the foaming tide came in and, rising, covered the rocky shelves they clung to, they opened their shut and shelly mouths to drink in water enough to last them when the tide went out, and till the next tide came in. Even so, twice a day also, at the least, are we to replenish our thirsty souls—fill our emptiness from the ocean of grace and mercy that flows, free and full in Christ, to the least of saints and chief of sinners.—Thomas Guthrie.

Man Must Open the Pathway for the River of Life. The desert is so empty and silent, it stretches out so endlessly. Even the wheels of the rushing train and the occasional whistle of the locomotive awake no echo. It is so dead—for hours at a time nothing but death. Then a struggle for life in weird cacti and dull sage-brush. One night as I was crossing it, I saw on every side balls of fire rolling, rushing, tumbling over each other in the sand, then turning to blackness. It was the tumble weed. It had tried hard to live but a blast of wind uprooted it, a careless match set it on fire, and it rolled along and turned to ashes. It was as if the desert mocked it, punished it for attempting to live. All night in the moonlight I could see when I pushed up the curtain, nothing but the dead plain and the dead hills and then—morning.

I could not believe the miracle. The train had stopped at a little station covered with roses! A tiny stream of water crept along at the right of the track. Half an hour before, death—and now green fields, the fragrance of orange blossoms, seas of golden poppies, beauty and glory everywhere. I looked back—the bare and naked hills lying dead in the sun were still visible, but they could not hurt me now, they had lost their terror for me, I knew, I *knew*!

Yes, I love to remember the dead desert waiting for God—and man. I say the last two words over to myself, for man must have faith enough to open a pathway for the water of life or the miracle cannot be wrought. It is God and man—always.—From an article by Miss Margaret Slattery in "The Congregationalist."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 7. The Brahman may give water to the Pariah and still retain his Brahmanic pride and prejudice; he has transcended it only when he asks water from the Pariah. Racial pride and religious prejudice may be

ignored when we minister to the alien or the heretic; they are transcended only when we ask the alien or the heretic to minister to us.—Bernard Lucas.

Verse 14.

"What trouble is that child to thee, my God,
Who sips thy gracious cup, and will not drink!"

Verse 23. Christ came to inspire us with the spirit of worship, not to direct the channel or the form of worship.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Verse 24. To be spiritual is to live in conscious nearness to God.—F. W. Tomkins.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

One immediate and personal lesson from the story of our Lord's interview with the woman by Jacob's well, is the privilege and duty of using the every-day opportunities of life as Jesus did his. He did not confine his conversation about God and the great spiritual truths which he had on his heart, to the synagogue or Sabbath Day. He used meal times and social visits and the occasions when he met people at work or at leisure in the fields or by the wayside, as the opportunity for spiritual conversation. There was nothing obtrusive in his manner or his words. The Savior saved people tactfully, but the saving was the vital thing, and to be tactful at the price of human souls is expensive. We would do well to learn this.—Robert E. Speer, in John's Gospel.

I think that God deals with us in a similar way today. He sounds the deep notes of our life and awakes our conscience. He puts his finger here and there that he may make us feel the need of a new birth. He hears us making inquiries about the water of life, and he says, "I must turn their asking into thirsting," and he does it by revealing the evil substance out of which we are weaving our days. He creates and intensifies the consciousness of guilt, and so inflames our soul with thirst. The awakening sentence varies with the individual need. "Go, call thy husband!" "Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor!" To King Herod he might well have said, "Go, fetch John the Baptist!" To some one today he might say, "Go, fetch the ledger!" Fetch the volume which records thy business transactions. Could every man cheerily bring the book for the eye of Jesus to examine, or would the naming of the book recall occurrences which emphasize the necessity of a new birth?—Adapted from Dr. J. H. Jowett.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Christ's conversations.
2. What Christ has done for woman. See "The Status of Woman in the Old Testament," "Biblical World," Feb. and June, 1910.
3. The argument of what "our fathers" did.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Where was Cana of Galilee? 2. Where was Capernaum? 3. What was the distance between the two? 4. On what other occasions did Jesus make use of the proverb given in verse 44? (Mt. 13.54-57; Mk. 6.4; Lk. 4.16-30.) 5. Of what did Jesus say the works he did bore witness? (Jn. 5.36.) 6. What kind of requests does God grant? (1 Jn. 5.14.) 7. Who wrote the Gospel of John? (*Guide*, p. 25.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What two days are referred to in verse 43? 2. Did the Galileans receive Jesus from the highest motives? 3. What proverb have we similar in meaning to that of verse 44? (Familiarity breeds contempt.) 4. Why is it often true that a prophet has no honor in his own country? (*Guide*, p. 97.) 5. What is the force here of the proverb as referred to by Jesus? (*Guide*, p. 94.) 6. Why does Jesus utter the words of verse 48? (*Guide*, p. 95.) 7. Why does John record the story about the healing of the nobleman's son? (*Guide*, p. 95.) 8. Does God grant all petitions? 9. What is prevailing prayer? 10. In what way was the nobleman's faith remarkable?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Learn the stanza on p. 97.

In your Note-Book write "VI. Jesus and the Woman of Samaria."

JESUS HEALS A NOBLEMAN'S SON

Golden Text

As thou hast believed so be it done unto thee. Matthew 8:13

LESSON John 4:43-54 MEMORIZE verses 49-51

43 And after the two days he went forth from thence into Galilee. 44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country. 45 So when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

46 He came therefore again unto Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought *him* that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, saying, that his son lived. 52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to amend. They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53 So the father knew that *it was* at that hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. 54 This is again the second sign that Jesus did, having come out of Judea into Galilee.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Return to Galilee, 43-45.
- II. The Nobleman's Petition, 46-49.
- III. Jesus' "Sign," 50-54.

43. *After the two days.* The two days with the Samaritans, verse 40.—*Into Galilee.* See verses 1-4.

44. *Jesus himself testified.* More than once: see Mt. 13:54-57; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 4:16-30.—*A prophet.* As our study of Old Testament lessons has shown, a prophet was not only nor chiefly one who foretold what was to occur, but one who spoke for God, interpreted his will.—*Hath no honor in his own country.* "It is with a man as it is with a picture, you must stand at a certain distance away to form a fair judgment." The meaning of this proverb is clear, but what is its connection with Jesus' going into Galilee and being received by the Galileans, next verse? What was Jesus' "own country": Judea, where he was born, or Galilee, where he had lived so long? It was Judea, some say: he was rejected there and went to Galilee where he was received. It was Galilee, others say: he left Judea because of his over-popularity which threatened a collision with the Pharisees, and went to Galilee where there was little danger of his being too highly honored, and yet there he was welcomed at first because of the miracles he had wrought in Jerusalem, verse 45. Godet's explanation is the best: Galilee is "his own country," and he would have met with a poor reception had he begun there, "for a prophet," etc. He began instead in Judea, and now, coming back to Galilee with the prestige of that Judean ministry behind him, he is enthusiastically welcomed by the Galileans.

45. *Having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast.* Review John's account in 2:13-3:22. "His countrymen had not discovered the greatness of this Galilean, although he had lived among them for thirty years; but no sooner do they hear that he has created a sensation in Jerusalem than they begin to be proud of him" (Dods). Note that they received him not as the Son of God, but merely as a worker of miracles.—*The feast.* The Passover.

46. *He came again.* See Jn. 2:1-11.—*Nobleman.* Or, *King's officer*, RVm.

The Greek word, βασιλεύς, nobleman, is primarily an adjective meaning royal. Herod Antipas, the ruler, or tetrarch, of Galilee, was often called "King."

47. *That he would come down.* Capernaum was on the Sea of Galilee, more than a third of a mile lower than Cana.

48. *Except ye see signs and wonders.* Jesus is addressing the nobleman, but he includes with him the great multitude who required signs before believing. The faith which he wished did not rest upon miracles wrought. As in the case of the Canaanitish woman (Mk. 7.27), Jesus was testing the nobleman.

49. The nobleman's prayer was believing, persistent, and pointed.

50. *Thy son liveth.* Is well.

52. *When he began to amend.* Began to change for the better: he expected the cure to be gradual.—*Yesterday at the seventh hour.* One P.M. "He appears to have gone leisurely away," Alford thinks, "for the hour was early enough to reach Capernaum the same evening. Yet if he reached home after sunset, he would speak of one o'clock as yesterday," for so it was by the Jewish reckoning.

53. *So the father knew that it was at that very hour.* "At the time the Diet of Nuremberg was held, Luther was praying in his own dwelling; and at the very hour when the edict granting free toleration to all Protestants was issued, he ran out of his house, crying out, 'We have gained the victory.'" (Tholuck.)—*He himself believed, and his whole house.* See ¶4, p. 100. "To believe because of a great benefit is blessed. It is even more blessed to believe through and over and in spite of a great sorrow. Ezekiel's wife died. He believed the more in God. Her death was to him and his people a sign as truly as the restoration of his boy was a sign to the nobleman. All things, both life and death, signify God" (Speer).

54. *The second sign.* See John 2.11.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

50. *The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way.* Gehazi would not have gone without the staff of the prophet, and the mother would not leave without the prophet himself (2 K. 4.30). Others, less exacting, were contented to take handkerchiefs and aprons to heal the sick and deliver the possessed (Acts 19.12). And some were even satisfied with the shadow of Peter (Acts 5.15). But in any case, orientals are never satisfied without something which was in real physical touch with the source of power which is to drive away sickness; so it happens now that if the saint, the holy man, or the shrine cannot be brought to the sick, then, as a last resort, some water which had been touched, or blown into, by him is taken to the sufferer. This nobleman, therefore, is in advance of ordinary orientals for he "believed the word," and went his way without a material token.—Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie in "Sunday School Times."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What was the first sign, or miracle, which Jesus wrought at Cana? What cultured aristocrat believed Jesus to be a Teacher from God? What wretched woman believed him to be the Son of God? What did Jesus do in Jerusalem during the Feast of the Passover, as recorded by John?

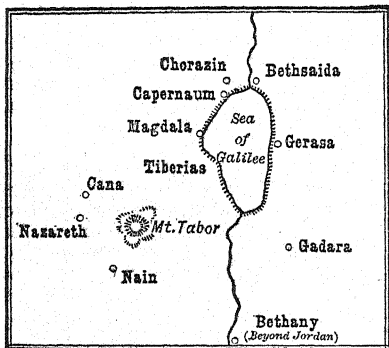
Why John Records the Healing of the Nobleman's Son. From all the many events which occurred during the first period of Jesus' Galilean ministry, so fully narrated in the Synoptic Gospels, John selects but one, the healing of the nobleman's son. "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book," says John; "but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." The way in which Jesus taught the nobleman that he was not a mere miracle-worker, that he had life in himself and could restore life by his word as readily as by his Presence, John would record, for it proves that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

The date is now December, 27 A.D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Sea of Galilee. "Jehovah hath created seven seas, said the rabbis, "but the Sea of Gennesaret (Galilee) is his delight." A beach that varies from a few hundred yards to half a mile in width intervenes between the lake and its surrounding hills. Passing around the lake to the left, one crosses on the

northwest the beautiful Plain of Gennesaret where Capernaum was situated. Below is Magdala. About five miles away from the Sea, southwest of



Magdala, is Kurn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin, where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. This is often spoken of as the "Mount of Beatitudes." The green slopes soon change to the dark, imprisoning cliffs at Tiberias. Then the ribbon-like coast widens till at the southern end the Jordan Valley, four miles wide, stretches away southward. Upon the eastern side of the lake the wall of hills is higher than on the western side, and the beach is half a mile wide except at Khersa. On the northeast is the Plain of el-Batiha, where Jesus fed the five thousand.

In the time of Jesus the shores of the lake were well-wooded, green and fruitful. The climate was pleasant, Josephus tells us. Now the shores are a wilderness, and the heat from April to July is intense. Only one city (Tiberias) and a few miserable hamlets exist where nine large cities flourished. No other region in all Palestine is so closely associated with the life of Jesus. Everywhere about the lake we can trace his footsteps, but it was the northwestern shore that he traversed most often, the district between Bethsaida on the farther side of the Jordan and Magdala, at the point where the lake is widest.

Capernaum was on the left shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was an important city, and had a Roman garrison under the command of a centurion. Jerusalem alone surpassed Capernaum as a meeting place for all people, for travelers passed through it on their way from Damascus and the Euphrates to the Mediterranean coast, and to Egypt. Peter and Andrew settled there, and Jesus made it his home after his rejection at Nazareth.

From Capernaum, where the nobleman's son was sick, to Cana, where the father went to seek Jesus, was probably a distance of twenty miles. Two sites are claimed for Cana, one a few miles northeast of Nazareth, the other still farther away on the north of that town. Cana was the birthplace of Nathanael. Here Jesus wrought the two miracles recorded in John 2:1-11; 4:46-54.

Assign paragraphs 50-53 and 155 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Wonderful things have been done in answer to prayer. It was the nobleman's faith that Jesus was able to save his son which brought him to Jesus with his great appeal, and his prayer was granted. Our Golden Text gives Jesus' words on another occasion of healing, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." Make sure, however, that your pupils understand these words aright. Make sure that they understand that Jesus does not mean that every prayer will be granted just as one wishes it granted provided one only believes this. There are conditions in regard to prevailing prayer, and one condition is that it must be in accordance with God's will. A beautiful faith was that of a little girl in England who had been promised a picnic on her birthday, and had prayed earnestly for weeks that the weather would be fine. But when the day dawned it was pouring. "You see," some one remarked to her, "God has not sent you a fine day. He does not hear or answer prayer." The child thought a moment and then replied: "Oh yes, he does hear, and he *did* answer me. But he said, 'No.'"

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Where was Jesus in our last Sunday's lesson? He was on his way from what province? To what province was he going? Point out these three provinces on your map. To what city did he come as our lesson today tells us? Find Cana. Where was the nobleman's home? Find Capernaum. Look at your relief map and tell me what was the elevation of Capernaum. Instead of elevation what word would better de-

scribe the location of Capernaum? From this depression in the Jordan Valley to what elevation did the nobleman ascend on his way to Cana?

For Older Pupils. The Rev. J. F. Gartshore, a missionary of Jamaica, was returning to his home in Scotland recently when he became very ill. There was no physician on board the steamer; what could be done? A wireless message was sent out over the seas in search of a medical man. The message reached a far-distant steamer, and a physician responded. Particulars of the sickness were then sent out, and the physician sent back instructions. They were followed out, the patient at once found relief, and by the time he reached home he had fully recovered. That is a modern instance of healing at a distance. Our lesson records such a healing by Jesus in the year 27 A.D. The healing at Cana was a miracle: does not the healing today by means of wireless telegraphy, a conversation carried on without any tangible or visible aid across hundreds of miles, also seem miraculous?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A PROPHET HATH NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

The Proverb is Often True. "The farther off I am received from my own home," complained Montaigne, "the better I am esteemed." No city claimed Homer when he was alive; seven claimed him after his death. The people of Ayrshire thought of Burns as only a plowman.

The proverb about the prophet in his own country is true today in Eastern lands, according to Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie (writing in the "Sunday School Times"). Natives of her village are leading teachers, preachers, and priests in other provinces, but her pastor and school-teachers come from other districts. Glancing over the mission field from Hebron to Aleppo, and from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, which is occupied by various American, European, and British societies, in all the centers of mission work the native preachers, teachers, and helpers are not native of the towns where they labor. Missionaries do not assume that because a preacher has no honor in his own town he is necessarily to blame, but probably that he can have no adequate influence.

Why the Proverb is True. Thomas Bailey Aldrich has expressed in four lines one reason why some prophets are unhonored at home:

"Bonnet in hand, obsequious and discreet,
The butcher that served Shakespeare with his meat
Doubtless esteemed him little, as a man
Who knew not how the market-prices ran."

Calvin gives two other reasons for the truth of the proverb that a prophet hath no honor in his own country: the natural slowness to believe great things of one who has been familiar from childhood, and the jealousy that we feel because of the distinction of our acquaintances.

It is because the prophet is so well known, that he is not appreciated in his own country. And some there are who permit themselves to become jealous of him whose life is so familiar. Why should one feel that honor accorded to an acquaintance detracts from his own? And yet that is the first impulsive thought of many, though they would not own it, perhaps, even to themselves. "James a Senator of the United States! Why, we were brought up together, and he is no smarter than I am; why should he be famous and I unknown? How many follies of his boyhood I can recall! I excelled him in scholarship at college. What has he done that this honor should come to him? Why am I not properly appreciated?" Thus the mind wanders on.

These lines are written in German on the walls of an old German castle; they might well be learned and put into practice by old and young:

I love a thing that's fine
Ev'n when it is not mine,
And, though it never mine can be,
Yet it delights and gladdens me.

II ANSWERED PRAYER

"I Know How the Nobleman Felt." I have watched the labored breathing of my own little boy. I have heard the kind tone of the physician telling me that he believed my boy had only a few hours to live. I recall

the dull anguish with which his words fell on my ears. I know what it is to cast one's self before God praying: "Come down ere my child die," feeling that, if death should come, I would still trust God, yet with the heart's cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

I have seen my boy's quivering nostrils grow quiet, his painful breathing become easier, till the struggle with death passed into natural sleep, I have watched the surprised hope on the physician's face till its unspoken assurance showed me that the crisis had passed, and that my boy would come back to me. Therefore I believe that God, who revealed himself in Cana through Jesus Christ, answers prayer. The sign of the healed boy in Capernaum helps me to believe on Christ, but the sign of the healed boy in Boston helps me more. I should not dare to pray for help from God and then refuse it when the doctor brought it to me. I should still believe in Jesus Christ if my boy had died. Those who know Christ are satisfied even in the depth of bereavement with his assurance, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."—Dr. A. E. Dunning, in "Sunday School Times."

An Idiot Boy's Answered Prayer. A New York boy caused his parents great anxiety, for they had made up their minds that he was an idiot. He had frequent convulsions, and as he grew older showed fewer signs of average intelligence. But one day the father overheard the boy praying, and the pathetic prayer brought hope to his heart. "Thou knowest, Lord, that my father and mother are disappointed in me," the lad prayed. "They can find nothing in me to be proud of. Thou knowest why, and thou knowest why thou hast given me the burden of these terrible convulsions. But I will trust thee; I will trust thee to the end."

The father left his business and took his boy for a tour around the world. On their return the boy was sent to school again, and he made rapid progress in his studies, excelling all his classmates. "When a University section of the Y. M. C. A. was started for the graduates of the medical and science and law colleges, of the four thousand men my son was chosen president," said Dr. W. F. Bainbridge, the now proud father. "When the World's Congress of Surgeons and Physicians met at Heidelberg and again at Brussels, my boy was chosen Vice-President—the idiot boy who told God that he could trust him, the boy who believed even though he could not understand." That boy is now one of the leading specialists in appendicitis and is known the world over for his remarkable success as a surgeon.

A Paradox. He asked for strength that he might achieve. He was made weak that he might obey.

He asked for health that he might do greater things. He was given infirmity that he might do better things.

He asked for riches that he might be happy. He was given weakness that he might feel the need of God.

He asked for all things that he might enjoy life. He was given life that he might enjoy all things.

He was given nothing that he asked for, more than he hoped for.

His prayer is unanswered. He is most blest.—"The Congregationalist."

Not My Will, but Thine, Be Done. "Yes, pray for me," she said to the friend who called to see her in the hospital. "But not in supplication. God knows what I want; he knows what is best to give. Don't ask him for anything; just help me lift up my soul."

"And yet Jesus said, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.'"

"Yes, I know; and I have asked, and shall continue to ask. But I am just learning that asking for things is a very small part of prayer. And this has come upon me so suddenly, so bewilderingly, I do not feel at all sure that I know what I ought to ask. Just thank him, and help me to look up."

So the friend prayed a prayer of gratitude and trust, and the weary, sick, but unconquered soul looked up and trusted.

It was a favorite saying of Henry Ward Beecher that "Prayer is not beggary, but communion." The invitation to ask in the name of Jesus does not mean that prayers are to conclude with an invariable formula in which his name appears, but that the prayer itself is of such a character that it can be offered in his name and spirit. Much less does it imply that God is unwilling to help his children for their own sake. Jesus said, "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you."

It might tend greatly to assist us in more wholesome views of prayer if we ceased to think about disputable "answers" to selfish teasings for our whims, and remembered that prayer is communion, and a means of bringing us so into fellowship with God that he can give us what he knows to be best for us."—"Youth's Companion."

Dr. Grenfell's Faith in Prayer. Prayer to me means speaking to my Father in Heaven, who yet somehow lives on earth enough to hear me, and not only knows what I want, but also what I really need, or what is best for me, and, moreover, who is sure to give it to me.

I approach him exactly as any one else to whom I would take a petition, and I address him as my common sense suggests, in perfect confidence that that is the way he would wish me to treat him. I credit him with knowing how much I want a thing, and whether I am willing to do all in my own power to obtain it. That is, I consider he will look to me, as it were, to be willing to pay the price. I never expect him to do my share.

III GREAT FAITH

Faith in Jesus Means Taking Him at His Word. Mr. Moody was once talking to a number of street boys, and trying to explain to them what faith meant. He had a beautiful book with him, and he held it out to one of the boys, saying, "This is yours if you take it." Most of the boys laughed, and thinking Mr. Moody was having sport with him, the boy refused to take the book. Mr. Moody repeated his offer to the other boys, and when one boy at last stepped forward and received it, the others asked if that boy were really going to keep it. "Of course, it is his book; I offered to give it to the one who would take it, and he has taken it," replied Mr. Moody, and then he went on to show those boys that faith means simply taking God at his word, and believing all that he has said. The nobleman took Jesus at his word, believed what he said to him, although it was a very difficult thing which Jesus required him to believe.

Faith the Instinct of the Spiritual World. Christ's mind was continually fixed on faith, the word was ever on his lips. It was the keynote of his preaching. His custom was to divide men into classes from the standpoint of religion, not morals—those who believed, those who believed not. He marveled twice: once at men's unbelief (Mark 6.6); once at a Roman centurion's faith (Matt. 8.10). When any one sought his help he demanded faith (Matt. 9.28). When he rebuked his disciples it was usually because they had little faith (Mark 4.40).

Christ insisted on faith for the same reason that a mathematician relies on the sense of numbers, or an artist on the sense of beauty; it was the one means of knowledge in his department. He was the Prophet of God and must address the God faculty in man. Between faith and God there was the same correspondence as between the eye and light. Faith proves God: God demands faith. When any one ignored faith and fell back on sight in the quest for God, Christ was in despair. Before such wilful stupidity he was amazed and helpless. You want to see, was his constant complaint, when in the nature of things you must believe. There is one sphere where sight is the instrument of knowledge: use it there—it is not my sphere. There is another where faith is the instrument: use it there—that is my sphere. But do not interchange your instruments. You can not see what is spiritual; you might as well expect to hear a picture. What you see you do not believe; it is a misnomer; you see it. What you believe you can not see; it would be an absurdity, you believe it. Faith is the instinct of the spiritual world: it is the sixth sense—the sense of the unseen.—John Watson, in "The Expositor."

First of All, Believe. Is not Christianity unreasonable in demanding belief at the start? Should it not furnish conclusive proof, and then ask us to believe? No, it cannot do that. If it should do so, it would go contrary to life as we know it in every other department. In every field of human activity belief comes first and proof comes second.

Certainly it is this way in the world of business. If I say to a piece of real estate: "O, real estate, please tell me, will you advance in value a hundred per cent in the next ten years? If you will give me conclusive proof,

then I will buy you,"—and the real estate answers not a word, for it considers me a fool. If I do not buy the real estate until it is plainly proved that its value will double within ten years, I shall never have a chance to buy it at all.

Would you believe in prayer? Take it for granted that prayer is beneficial and then experiment—that is scientific. Would you believe that Christ is Divine? Assume that he is, and then experiment by trusting him, doing the things he says you ought to do—the proof will be abundant later on. Jesus is not asking us any unreasonable thing when he tells us first of all to believe.—Condensed from "Things Fundamental," by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Unprofitable "Faith." Many years ago Sir Edwin Arnold described the attitude of the Japanese towards the supernatural as one of "politeness towards possibilities." A faith of that kind, though faith is too fine a term for it, will never carry life into deep and satisfying convictions. Whoever reached the secret of Jesus, cherishing as he went the secret fear that it might turn out to be a mistake? Nothing can shut us off so effectually from the knowledge of God as the uneasy suspicion that after all our religion may betray us into foolishness before the outside world, or compromise our dignity, or leave us awkwardly in the lurch. We must meet God's generous welcome in Christ with a venture of the whole life. It must be all or nothing. The doubtful mind, which is at best polite toward the possibilities of the gospel, which never lets itself go frankly, which is ready to draw back in the event of being disappointed—that mind does no justice to God; it remains a stranger to the inward meaning of his fellowship and to the reasons of his gracious revelation.—Dr. James Moffat, in "Reasons and Reasons."

How the Nobleman's Faith Grew. We see in this nobleman three degrees of faith. First his faith is in "signs"; he believes that Jesus has the power to work a miracle, and if he will only come to Capernaum he can heal his son. This faith leads him to seek Jesus, and his seeking brings him the reward of greater faith. His faith rises to belief in Jesus' simple word. "Go thy way; thy son liveth," are Jesus' assuring, commanding words to him. This greater faith leads him to obey Jesus' words, and his obedience brings to him the greatest faith of all, not belief merely in Jesus as a miracle worker, not even simple belief in his words, but belief, faith, trust in Jesus himself. He believed and his whole house.

A Growing Christian Must Grow in Faith. If we think of faith as a belief in certain propositions, we may not see the need of increasing our faith; but if we realize that the object of our faith is a Person, not a fact, and that our faith in God is a personal experience, we shall see that there must be progression in our faith. The little child in the home knows his father and mother but imperfectly; it is only after years of companionship with them, and after he has himself grown to man's estate, that he can understand and appreciate the many sides of their natures. The young Christian does not know all that he may know about his Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ; if, after years of companionship with them, he does not know them better and trust them more fully, there has been something wrong about his Christian life, he has not attained "unto the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, no longer a child, but grown up in all things into him, who is the Head, even Christ."

March On, My Soul!

March on, my soul, nor like a laggard stay!
March swiftly on! Yet err not from the way
Where all the nobly wise of old have trod—
The path of faith, made by the sons of God.
Follow the marks that they have set beside
The narrow, cloud-swept track, to be thy guide;
Follow, and honor what the past has gained,
And forward still, that more may be attained.

—Henry Van Dyke.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 47. Prayer opens the sluice-gates between us and the Infinite.—Tennyson.

Verse 48. The question is not, How much do I believe? but, How do I believe?—Phillips Brooks.

Verse 49. More things are wrought by prayer
Than the world dreams of.

—Tennyson.

Verse 50. Help us to reach out past the things we can not understand to the God we trust.—Dr. M. D. Babcock.

Verse 50. A true believer will crucify the question "Why?" He will obey without questioning.—Luther.

Verse 53. What is needed is not so much great faith as faith in a great God.—Alexander Urquhart.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Ruskin says: "There is nothing so small but that we may honor God by asking his guidance in it, or insult him by taking it into our own hands. His is not the finite authority that can be troubled with small things." Help in our troubles great or small can be gained by taking them to the Lord in prayer.

The nobleman believed the word that Jesus spoke unto him. The Gospels are full of the words that Jesus has spoken unto us. Do we believe them? Do we trust Jesus and take him at his word? Do our lives show that we have this faith in him? It is a comforting thought that God can take this little faith of ours and lead us through a life of obedience to him into that perfect faith which trusts him wholly and unreservedly.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Modern miracles. See "The Wireless Telephone," "Outlook," Oct. 13, 1915.
2. What prayer is answered. See the Second Topic and "Prayer and its Answers" in "The Outlook," Jan. 6, 1912.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What were "these things," verse 1? 2. What events occurred between the last lesson and this, given in the Synoptic Gospels? (*Guide*, p. 104.) 3. At what feast did Jesus go to Jerusalem? (*Guide*, p. 102.) 4. Where was the pool of Bethesda? (*Guide*, p. 104.) 5. What words of the AV are omitted from the RV? Why? 6. What had brought about the man's infirmity? (Verse 14.) 7. What did the curing of the man show that Jesus could do? (Jn. 5.21, 22.) 8. What was the purpose of this miracle? (Jn. 5.36.) 9. What does Christ say was the source of his power? (Jn. 5.19.) 10. What had been the effect on the Jews of the two Galilean miracles? (Their faith was aroused.) 11. What was the effect of this Judean miracle? (Their hostility was aroused.) 12. What laws had the Jews made in regard to the keeping of the Sabbath? (*Guide*, p. 103.) 13. Read the defense of Jesus, verses 19-47, and give their substance. 14. What did Jesus say about doing good on the Sabbath? (Mk. 2.27, 28.) 15. What other miracles of healing on the Sabbath are recorded? (Mt. 12.9-13; Mk. 1.21-28; 29-32; Lk. 13.10-17; 14.1-6; Jn. 9.1-14.) 16. With what man in one of Christ's parables may the man at the pool of Bethesda be compared in his helplessness and the treatment he received from others? (The Parable of the Good Samaritan.) 17. What reasons have we for believing that John wrote the Fourth Gospel? (*Guide*, p. 25.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Whence did Jerusalem get its water-supply? 2. What is an intermittent spring? 3. What is the difference between well water and soda water? 4. Why do many people go to Hot Springs and other similar places? 5. For what were the porches at Bethesda used? 6. What does "made whole" mean here? 7. Why did Jesus ask the man if he would be cured? 8. What kind of bed did the man take up? 9. Was the man grateful for his cure? 10. What was the principle which controlled Jesus' deeds on the Sabbath? 11. Have we as a nation any unreasonable scruples regarding what may not be done on Sunday? 12. Do we countenance the doing on Sunday of anything which desecrates the day?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Austin Dobson's stanzas, p. 105. In your Note-Book write "VII. Jesus and the Nobleman."

JESUS AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

Golden Text

It was Jesus who had made him whole. John 5.15

LESSON John 5.1-15 MEMORIZE verses 8, 9

1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep *gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered. 5 And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. 6 When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? 7 The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.

Now it was the sabbath on that day. 10 So the Jews said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. 11 But he answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12 They asked him, Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up *thy bed*, and walk? 13 But he that was healed knew not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place. 14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee. 15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Sign at the Springs, 1-9.
- II. The Sequel of the Sign, 10-18.
- III. Utterances concerning the Source of Life, 19-47.
 1. The Prerogatives and Power of the Son Come from the Father, 19-29.
 2. The Credentials of the Son are (1) His Works, (2) The Testimony of the Father, (3) The Scriptures, 30-47.

1. *After these things.* The events of the Galilean period (Jn. 4.45), of which John has narrated only the cure of the nobleman's son.—*A feast of the Jews.* Some noted authorities hold that this was the Passover, the second in Jesus' ministry. The majority believe that it was the Feast of Purim, which occurred in March, about a month before the Passover. Its origin is doubtful, though the Jews commemorated in it the triumph over Haman, who proposed to exterminate the Jews in the Persian empire on a particular day chosen by lot (Esther 3.7). "The feast was mainly of a convivial and charitable character, but in the synagogues the book of Esther was read, and the congregation applauded the name of Mordecai, and cursed that of Haman."

2. *By the sheep gate.* Notice that the word *gate* is in italics, which shows that it is not in the original Greek. The word *προβατικὴ* is an adjective, meaning *pertaining to sheep*, and *πύλη*, gate, should be supplied, not *ἀγορὰ*, market, as in the AV, for it is not known that there was a sheep-market in Jerusalem, while the sheep-gate is mentioned in Neh. 3.1; 12.39.—*A pool.* Where the sheep destined for sacrifice were washed.—*Bethesda.* The word means "House of Mercy."

3, 4. *Withered.* The words which follow this in the AV are given in the margin of the Revised Version as inserted by many ancient authorities. It is thought that the words crept into the text from the margin where they had been written by a copyist because of the words of verse 7. As Dr. Far-

rar reminds us, the Jews, after the Captivity, had come back deeply impressed by the angelology and demonology which they had learned from the Persians. "They attributed everything, even the most ordinary daily events, to the action of good or evil spirits. This verse was a marginal note by some Jewish Christian who shared the common superstition." "Medicinal springs are scattered over the face of the earth by the Almighty; and God's agency is the angel in the water" (Bull). It was an intermittent spring whose waters had curative properties, and according to the popular superstition its bubbling was ascribed to supernatural agency.

5. *In his infirmity.* He was doubtless paralyzed.

6. *Wouldest thou be made whole?* Hast thou the will to be made well? Our words *whole, holy, heal, hale, health*, are all related, being derived from the one Anglo-Saxon word *hāl*. The man had been so long helpless that he had lost all hope. Jesus first aroused his desire, his will to be cured. So today slum-workers must first arouse the will of the "down-and-outs," who have no thought of ever being in any way different from what they are.—*I have no man.* "The thirty-eight-years sick man is like unto our abandoned Africa; the man said, I have no man, but Christ said, I'm your Man" (An African chief's words to Dan Crawford).

7. *When the water is troubled.* Apparently only the freshly flowing water of the intermittent spring was beneficent.

8. *Arise, take up thy bed.* See Mk. 2.9. The bed was a mat: it is called a pallet in the RVm.

10. *It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.* See Light from Oriental Life. "Healing was insignificant compared with violating a custom. Thus the Salvation Army, the Sunday-school, the Y.M.C.A., would have all been slain by fearful formalists had not the Savior stepped between" (Bull).

14. *Sin no more.* The inference is that the man's sickness was due to sin.

15. *Told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.* They had charged him with violating the Sabbath, now he refers them to his Physician who, he felt sure, could defend himself. "The law of the Sabbath is a law of a Being who never rests from doing good" (Chrysostom).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *A pool having five porches.* Mineral springs are abundant in Western Asia, and most of them formerly had protecting structures over them, some of whose remains are yet standing. Bethesda is now dry, but the Pool of Siloam, which is of the same nature, and was probably supplied from the same source, has an intermittent ebb and flow occurring every few minutes. Near Beirut is a fountain of this kind, gushing forth from the foot of Lebanon in so copious a flow that its waters are utilized as a mill-stream to supply flour for the city; but it is periodically dry for hours at a time.—Van Lennep, Bible Lands.

The porches were built around the pool for the protection of the sick who came there to bathe. They were small compartments, covered overhead, and open toward the pool.

8. *Take up thy bed.* The bed was only a blanket, or mat, which could be easily rolled up and carried. Sometimes it was merely the outer garment. Those in better circumstances had a mattress filled with cotton which was thrown down at night on the floor or on an elevated divan. (See 2 Kings 1.4.)

9. *It was the Sabbath.* "Take heed to yourselves and bear no burden on the Sabbath day" was the command of the prophet Jeremiah. (Jer. 17.21.) When the Pharisees spoke of what it was lawful or unlawful to do on the Sabbath, they referred not only to the laws in the Old Testament, but also to their own interpretations of those laws. The rabbis had made thirty-nine "primary rules" and countless "derivative rules" in regard to what could not lawfully be done on the Sabbath. It was even declared unlawful to go out on the streets toward the end of Friday with the smallest burden—a needle or a pen—lest one have to carry it when the Sabbath began. All acts of healing were



Carrying a "Bed" in the East

forbidden on the Sabbath, and six times we read of Jesus being accused either directly or indirectly of breaking this law.

Their law in regard to carrying anything on the Sabbath said: "Whosoever on the Sabbath bringeth anything in, or taketh anything out from a public place to a private one, if he hath done this inadvertently, he shall sacrifice for his sin; but if wilfully, he shall be cut off and shall be stoned." This law could be evaded by "connecting" one building with another by means of a wire or rope extending through the streets, or even by laying a beam over the narrow entrance of an alley. "This, by a legal fiction, made them 'a private dwelling,' so that everything was lawful there which a man might do on the Sabbath in his own house."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What is the first miracle recorded in John's Gospel? What is the second miracle? In what city were these miracles wrought? In what province? What effect had these two miracles upon the people?

Events between the Healing of the Nobleman's Son and the Healing at the Pool of Bethesda. The healing of the nobleman's son occurred in December, A.D. 27. The Synoptic Gospels record other events of the Galilean Ministry: the first rejection at Nazareth, the removal to Capernaum, the more formal calling of the four fishermen and the miraculous draught of fishes, a day of miracles in Capernaum, a preaching tour through Galilee, the healing of a leper and of a paralytic, the call of Matthew, and the question about fasting.

John next tells of Jesus being in Jerusalem at the time of one of the great national festivals, and of his healing the infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda, probably in April, A.D. 28.

The Profound Discourse to which the Healing at Bethesda Led. This healing resulted in the first outbreak of hatred against Jesus in Judea. Briefly noticing their charge of Sabbath-breaking by declaring that in his deed of mercy he was doing what his Father did, Jesus angered them still more because he "not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father."

Then Jesus explained to them that his Sonship meant doing what his Father does, granting the gift of life to men, and judging them according to their use of that gift, for he is the source of life. There were four witnesses borne to him as the Son of God: by John the Baptist, by his own works, by the testimony of the Father, and by the Scriptures. "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him." "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself." Yet after all these witnesses he was rejected by them because they would not believe in him.

Because the healing of this man at the Pool of Bethesda was the beginning of that persecution of Jesus which it was John's purpose to carefully trace, and because it occasioned the utterance of great truths concerning Jesus' relationship to the Father, it has been given a place in John's Gospel.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In our last lesson Jesus was at Cana in Galilee. He went from there to Capernaum, which became thereafter "his own city." He remained in Galilee several months, and then again went southward through Lower Galilee, Samaria, and Judea as far as Jerusalem.

Six pools have been identified as the *Pool of Bethesda*. The Crusaders built a porch over a pool near the Church of St. Anne, and on the wall of the crypt they made a representation of an angel troubling the water. Robinson and George Adam Smith incline to the view that it was the pool now called the Fountain of the Virgin, at the southeastern corner of the Temple slope.

Assign paragraphs 123 and 124 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It was not until after the man had been restored to strength that Jesus said to him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee." In that wonderful scene on the hillside by the Sea of Galilee, which we shall study next week, Jesus fed the physical hunger of the multitude before he offered them the Bread of Life. He was always keenly sympathetic in the face of human needs. We can not think of his leaving a tract at a poor man's door when the man needed first of all a loaf of bread or a ton of coal! Missionaries follow their Master's example

and bring first the necessities of life to those that lack. Draw the attention of your pupils to this method of Jesus, and to their own partnership with him when they send money or other gifts to be used in a similar way on the mission field.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Over in Africa the native doctors try to cure sick people by giving them medicines that are very bitter, but though they know little about God, they begin their labor by looking up and saying, "Up in heaven yonder there is a traveling doctor, passing through all the land with healings." Down on the earth in the days that we are studying, there was "a traveling Doctor," who did indeed pass through the land with healings. Who was he? Whom did he heal in our last week's lesson?

For Older Pupils. How different would the life of Jesus be to us if we had the records of his sermons without the records of his going about doing good! "Life for Jesus was like passing through a hospital or spending his days among the enfeebled and despairing," to quote an editorial in "The Continent." "He created his own environment, and he did it by the warmth and sympathy of his mighty heart. It is not hard for some people to hide from the distressed and the poverty-pinched and the crying and the sad-hearted. No poor, human derelict ever drifts into their harbor. No beggar ever stumbles up their steps. No lonely soul ever seeks their companionship. Their house-gate is a breakwater against which the billows of woe, surging up from humanity's great sea, dash and roll back into the troubled deep. If no unfortunates, no wrecks, no tramps, no down-and-outs, ever come to our door or find their way to our office or place of business for a little help and a little cheer, it is not much of a compliment to our humanity, much less to our religion. Jesus could not be hid. The world's bitter grief drew him as the magnet draws the steel."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Wouldest Thou Be Made Whole?

The Will to be Well. In many a case of sickness it is the will that is at fault, not the circumstances. The sick person persists in being sick because his will to be well is feeble. Every physician has lost patients whom he could have restored to health had they cared to live. And every physician has had patients make a surprising recovery because of the sheer force of their will to get well.

The same may be said in regard to the health of the soul. A thoughtful pastor told his congregation recently that in his prayers, instead of saying, "Do not let me be feeble, do not let me be passionate, do not let me be irritable"; and instead of saying, "Heal thou my temper, heal thou my courage, heal thou my passion"; he now said, "Heal thou my will." And he asked his hearers to join with him in this new kind of prayer: "Not, Put away, O Lord, temptation; not, Take the taste of drink from me; or Make me stop in time—but, Heal thou my will so that I may genuinely and powerfully resolve to do the things which thou givest me grace enough to accomplish."

God Worketh in Me to Will. My Lord demands my will in the ministry of healing. "Art thou willing to be made whole?" He will not carry me as a log. I have always will-power sufficient to pray and to try. In the effort of faith I open the door to the energies of God. Grace flows in the channels of the determined will.

And my Lord demands my will in the living of the consecrated life. "Sin no more!" I must "will" to be whole, and I must will to remain holy. And here is the gracious law of the kingdom, that every time I exercise my will I add to its power. Every difficulty overcome adds its strength to my resources. Every enemy conquered marches henceforth in my own ranks. I "go from strength to strength."

"God worketh in me to will!" The gracious Lord even strengthens the will that is willing. He transforms the frail reed into an iron pillar, and makes trembling timidity bold as a lion.

"Mighty Spirit, dwell with me,
I myself would mighty be."

—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "My Daily Meditation."

Determination versus Desire. Was anything decisive for heroic ever done in a languid temper? Was the state of mind of Columbus languid when he braved the Atlantic, of Napoleon when he crossed the Alps, or of Franklin when he attacked the problem of the North Pole? Was anything of moment ever compassed in a mood that is hardly distinguished from mere passivity? Never. When we deal with formidable difficulties, confront serious opposition, we gird up the loins of our mind and put forth the full force of the soul; in such circumstances it is only through conviction, resolution, and grim determination that men achieve success. "I *consent* unto the law that it is good." Here Paul's words indicate a will that is infirm, apathetic, and ineffective; its attitude is right, but how faint and feeble its fiat! The finger points in the right direction, but it is the finger of a nerveless hand. Very different is the position of Paul in regard to volition after the power of Christ rested on him. He no longer merely consents to the law, he finds himself able to fulfil all righteousness. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." In him the power of moral determination has been reconverted, and the royal faculty exercises its full and delightful sovereignty. Henceforth his words and ways remind us of the sound of a trumpet, the tramp of a conqueror, the shout of a king. And the same Lord can make us will the good; will that we may do it, and do it with such sympathy and mastery that we find out heaven in the doing of it.—Adapted from a Sermon by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

II HELPING OTHERS TO BE MADE WHOLE

A Connecting Link. On the one hand you have a man who lies helpless in his need, on the other hand you have a divine provision to meet that need; yet the man remains unhealed because there is missing some one to put him into the pool when the water is troubled.

Such is the picture in the story. I want to lift that picture up. I would have you see behind the man with his need the deep soul-need of all men everywhere, and behind that pool of healing the Divine provision in the Gospel to meet the soul-need—brought to us by no angel, but by the Son of God himself, and available not at stated times, but at all times and for all men. Further, I would have you see in the absence of the man to bring the one into touch with the other, a link missing today, to a much larger extent than we have yet fully realized. There are men and women in this city, and in this country, who so much need all that is provided for them in Christ that they will not seek it unless aided to do so by their fellows. They are as flabby in will as he was helpless in body. They need the churches so much that they never darken their doors. They need the Gospel so much that they never go where they can hear it.

Today, as ever, the hedges and the ditches may be full of the lame, the impotent, and the withered; yet they will not come in until they are importuned so to do by men and women practised in the art of loving compulsion. Let me appeal to the young people, and especially to the young men, to be the kind of man that God can use. Covet this high service so much that for their sakes you will sanctify yourselves.—Condensed from a Sermon by J. N. Britton.

"Surge, et Ambula."

"Arise and walk"—the One Voice said;
And lo! the sinews shrunk and dry
Loosed, and the cripple leaped on high,
Wondering, and bare aloft his bed.
The Age of Miracle is fled:
Who to the halt today shall cry—
"Arise and walk?"

Yet though the Power to raise the dead
Treads earth no more, we still may try
To smooth the couch where sick men lie.
Whispering—to hopeless heart and head—
"Arise and walk!"

—Austin Dobson.

A Working Partner of the Great Physician. Because of the great demands made upon his time, Doctor Goodwin is little known save in his pro-

fessional capacity. Church life he has had little part in, at least since coming into active professional life. Society knows nothing of him. His pleasures and recreations are few, while his patients, regarding him as they do with a feeling akin to veneration, are yet far from being on familiar terms with him.

One day, however, a woman whose husband had been brought through a dangerous illness forgot her timidity as she addressed the man to whom she felt so much was due.

"It isn't," she said earnestly, "it isn't just your curing him, doctor, that makes us always glad to see you, but that we always feel different every time you come. When we see you come into the house, somehow we feel that you are going to do the right thing. And when you go out we know you are praying—doctor, you are a Christian, aren't you?" she finished abruptly. The doctor's face took on a crimson color. "Why do you ask that? What makes you think I am?" he asked huskily.

"Because"—the woman hesitated—"because—I think—no—one who was not a Christian could make others always think about—God. And everyone does when you come into the house. So many have said so."

The doctor was deeply touched. It was some little time before he found words to answer. "I—hope—I believe—that I am a Christian," he said at length, humbly, "and I thank you for your words, my friend. If I can make men and women think about the Lord when they see me, I am more successful than I ever dared to dream. And—yes, I do pray for my patients. Otherwise I could not hope for the results I have had."

And all day long the woman, about her tasks, as she recalled the expression of gratitude and joy on the physician's face, repeated over and over again, "I'm so glad I told him what his visits and friendship mean to us. I'm so glad that he knows his life is appreciated."

And on his trips that day—yes, and for many a day—the physician's heart sang rapturously: "Not only for my medical skill do they value me, but because he has made me a witness of himself they believe me a working partner of the Great Physician."—"The Youth's Companion."

III DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

The Inspiration of Difficulty. Thomas A. Edison had no carbohc acid with which to continue his manufacture of storage batteries. The acid must be had, but the source of supply from Germany was cut off by the great European war. No one had ever tried to manufacture it in this country. Edison called his staff of chemists and together they tried one formula after another until the retort yielded a few drops of the needed fluid. But how could they secure it in sufficient amount and at once? No chemical factory would promise to manufacture a supply by his new process earlier than nine months. Nothing daunted, Mr. Edison called upon his own men to erect a factory and manufacture carbohc acid. It must be done, and therefore it can be done, seems to be Edison's logic, and he inspires his men with his unconquerable faith. In seventeen days the factory was built and was turning out a sufficient supply of carbohc acid for Mr. Edison's needs.

Nothing is Impossible that Jesus Tells Us to Do. This poor man had been ill for many years. He was lonely, and had no friend to help him. He was quite helpless, too; he had not even the strength to crawl down to the healing water. And Jesus told that helpless man to do three things—to get up, to fold up his bed, and to walk. Impossible! you say. That poor man could not do even one of those things. But he did all three. He rose up, folded his bed, and just walked home to astonish and gladden everybody there.

Now, from this I learn that nothing is impossible that Jesus tells us to do. He tells us to do many things, and a great many of them seem not only hard but quite impossible. For instance—"Love your enemies"; "Do good to them that ill-treat you"; "Overcome evil with good." How can I love the girl who says bad things about me, and does all she can to give me a hard time? That is just how the people thought when they heard these words of his to the sick man. "It can't be done," they said. But he proved that it could. And so can anything that Jesus has set us. He would not give us the task if we could not do it. Don't despair when you face Christian duties. Just remember who gave you the task, and then you will know that there is a way to do it.

Another thing I learn is that Jesus is the key to all impossibilities. This man did all, but he could not have done it if he had been alone. It was Jesus' presence—the look of him, the tone of his voice, the power that came from him—which enabled him to conquer. And that is what has helped men in all ages to do the impossible thing—to carry the Gospel to the cannibals, to suffer in prisons, to die amid the blazing faggots—the inspiration and strength of Jesus. Have you an impossible thing in your life just now—a something so hard to do that it almost makes you cry when you think of it? Just tell Jesus that you must have his help, and you will get it and win through. What Paul said is quite true: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."—C. E. Stone, in "Sunday School Chronicle."

In Him Who Empowers Me, I Can Do All Things. When it was said in the presence of John Smith, who was an under-master at Harrow School, and whose life was, as far as we ever can say it of any human life, a perfect and saintly one, that some one had a difficult task before him, he exclaimed in astonishment, "Difficult? Difficult? Why, he is a Christian." "All power is given unto me in Heaven and on earth," saith the Lord, and he exercises that power in and through those who are in him. If we can maintain the connection that is contained in this little preposition "in," "in him that empowers me," "we may remove not only the word "difficult" but the word, "impossible" out of our vocabulary.

I saw a beautiful comparison the other day. The difference between the man who is only under the influence of the world and the man who is in Christ is the difference between a sailing ship and a great steamer. The sailing ship is liable to be drifted out of its course or arrested in its progress by contrary winds, and if the winds fail, the ship lies idle and cannot move. That is the man of the world, who is in the world and of the world, and the world does what it likes with him. There is no driving power within, it is all from without. He is the sport of the winds and waves. But you in Christ are like a great steamship, with its towering decks, sitting solidly and peacefully in the tumultuous seas, not dependent on the winds from without nor greatly hindered by them, but driven steadily forward by the power within.

Christ is in you, propelling you through the billows, steering you to the haven. A great peace falls on the soul when the fact is realized that you are in Christ and Christ is in you.—Condensed from "The Springs of Joy," by Dr. R. F. Horton.

Attempt Great Things for God. The reading of Cook's "Voyages" led Carey to think of the nations that are without hope because they are without God. As he worked at his bench he thought of these nations and resolved to do something for the betterment of their condition. He made a globe of leather to help him in teaching geography. As he would point out the different nations he would say to his pupils, "These are Christians; these are Mohammedans; and these are Pagans." As he uttered the word "Pagan" his lips quivered and his eyes filled with tears. That humble shoemaker's shop was the birthplace of modern missions. A man without a collegiate education was the agent the Lord selected to lead in this enterprise. Many years afterwards, in the English House of Parliament, Wilberforce said that he did not know of a finer instance of the moral sublime than that a poor cobbler working in his stall should conceive the idea of converting the Hindus to Christ. "Why, Milton's planning his 'Paradise Lost' in his old age and blindness was nothing to it."—Archibald McLean, in "Epoch Makers of Modern Missions."

He Believed He Couldn't Fail. A few years ago a young man led a Bible work in the city of Brooklyn, which enlisted over five hundred men in Bible study at one of the buildings of the Y.M.C.A. He encountered indifference, hostility, and sometimes disdain. Few believed he would succeed, but the spirit of victory in the man won that Bible campaign. Gradually opposition withered before the burning zeal of this leader. The Association building and the homes of many members were filled, one night each week, with scores of young men studying the Bible. The general secretary was asked the reason for this great awakening. He answered, "We had a man for leader who was fool enough to believe he couldn't fail." This man saw the goal more clearly than the obstacles.—Clayton Sedgwick Cooper, in "The Bible and Modern Life."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. Every Christian congregation is a Pool of Bethesda: all that gather here are somehow lame and halt and blind and diseased, and those most of all lame or halt or blind or diseased who know it not.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Verse 6. Look inward through the depths of thine own soul,
How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?
—James Russell Lowell.

Verse 7. I testify to what the good and strong have done for deprivation and infirmity.—Helen Keller.

Verse 8. Faith is not a wish, not a longing, but an executive act.—Dr. A. T. Pierson.

Verse 9. All Divine commandments are enablements.

Verse 11. Expect great things from God and attempt great things for God.—Carey.

Verse 13. Men are being healed daily, being kept in health and life, supplied with all that makes life worth while, yet apparently they know not the wondrous One whose presence is responsible for all.—S. D. Gordon.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

More important than health of body is health of soul. Art thou *willing* to be made whole?

Many instances are given in the Gospels that show the boundless compassion of Jesus, and with them all, as well as in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, we may read his words, "Go thou and do likewise."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The survival of the unfittest. See Chapter VIII of Dr. C. F. Aked's "The Courage of the Coward."

2. Christian Science healing. Dr. Robert E. Speer asks if it is not easy to see the difference between the attitude of Jesus, who recognized that the man was not whole and made him whole, and the attitude of the modern school of thought which tells him that he only thinks he is not whole, but that he really is. "Jesus changed facts. The modern opinion denies them. This contrast exists in spiritual things as well as physical."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. In how many Gospels is this miracle recorded? 2. What miracles are recorded in all four Gospels? (*Guide*, p. 27.) 3. Read the account of the feeding of the five thousand in Mt. 14, Mk. 6, and Lk. 9. 4. What was the reason for the withdrawal to the other side of the Sea of Galilee? (Mk. 6.21-31.) 5. Why is the Sea of Galilee called the Sea of Tiberias? (*Guide*, p. 110.) 6. How were the fish prepared? (*Guide*, p. 111.) 7. What was the purchasing power of a shilling? (Footnote of AV.) 8. What does Mark say about the way in which the crowd was seated? 9. After this miracle, what did the multitude wish to do? 10. What other miraculous supplies of food are mentioned in the Bible? (Quails and manna, Ex. 16.11-18; Elijah fed by ravens, 1 K. 17.2-6; by the widow, 1 K. 17.8-16; by an angel, 1 K. 19.4-8; the feeding of the four thousand, Mk. 8.1-9; the great draught of fishes after the Resurrection of Jesus, Jn. 21.4-13).

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did the people follow Jesus? 2. What is meant by "proving" Philip? 3. How did Jesus bear interruptions? 4. Is one's Christian character more severely tested by great troubles or by the many little interruptions and annoyances of life? 5. What is a miracle? 6. How had Jesus met the temptation to turn stones into bread for himself in the wilderness? 7. He would not satisfy his own hunger by a miracle; why did he that of the multitude? 8. What were the two purposes of this miracle? 9. How does this multiplication of the loaves differ from the multiplication of grain according to God's laws in nature?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Learn the stanza on [p. 117. Continue your writing in your note-book.

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

Golden Text

Give us this day our daily bread. Matthew 6.11

LESSON John 6.1-21: verses 1-14 printed MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea of Tiberias*. 2 And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick. 3 And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. 4 Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 5 Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? 6 And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9 There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many? 10 Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would. 12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost. 13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten. 14 When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Multitude, 1-4.
- II. The Testing of Faith, 5-7.
- III. The Lad's Supply, 8.
- IV. The Miracle Wrought, 9-13.
- V. A Truth Dimly Recognized, 14.

1. *After these things.* The miracle which was our last lesson, the criticism of Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, and his words about the source of his authority and power.—*Which is the Sea of Tiberias.* The city of Tiberias, built by Herod Antipas in honor of the Emperor Tiberius, had given its name to the lake.

2. *The signs.* The miracles.

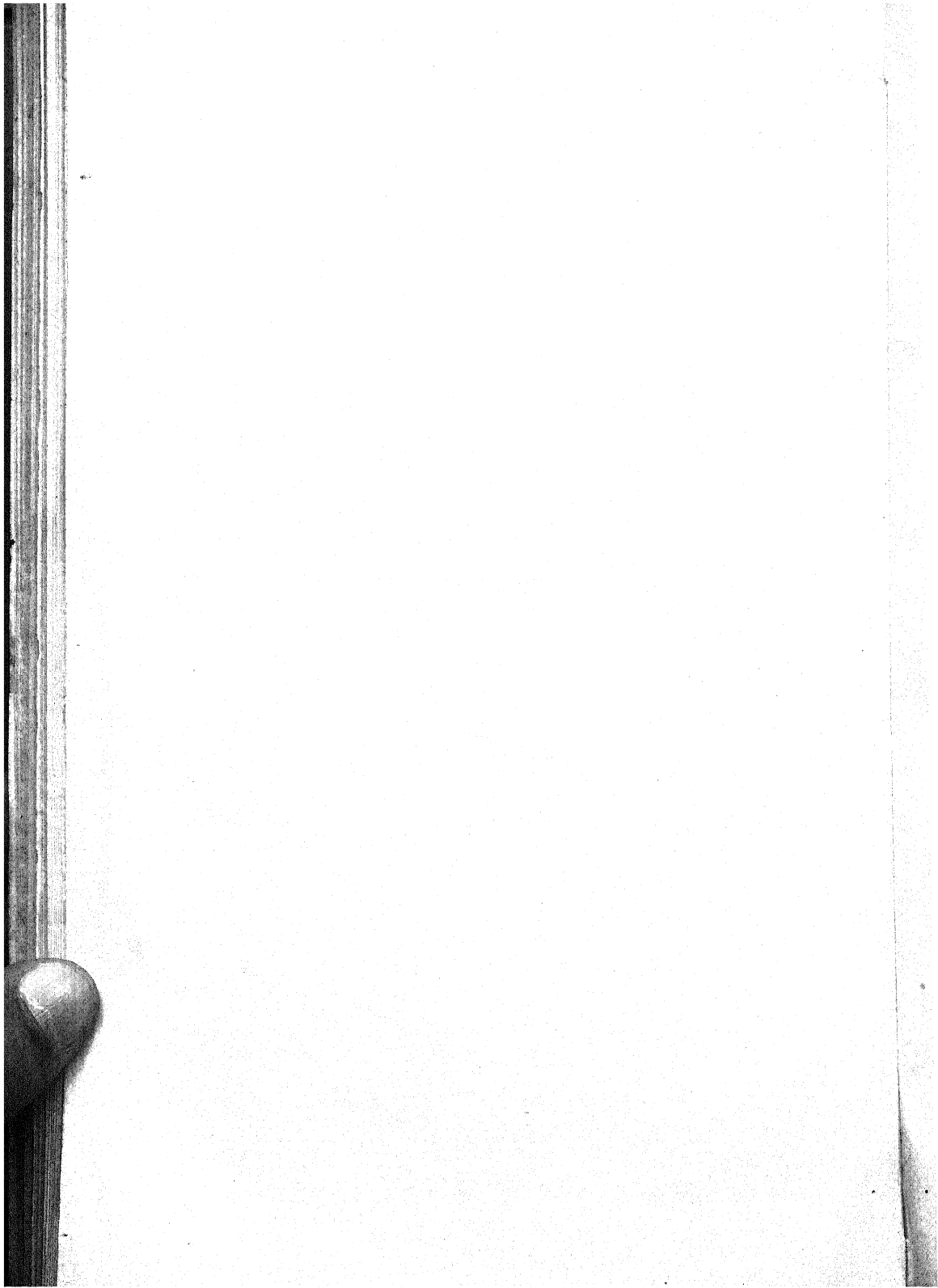
4. *Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.* This was the second Passover in Jesus' public ministry. "This Passover is made notable by Jesus' absence from Jerusalem, the only Passover absence of his ministry. And the reason is the violence of the persecution by the national leaders. Was the feeding of the hungry thousands with a handful of loaves and fishes the real Passover celebration? The multitudes fed by him who was the Lamb of God and the true Bread of life, while the technical observance was empty of life? It wouldn't be the only thing of the sort, in ancient times or modern" (S. D. Gordon).

5. *Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes.* "The picture is of a Man sitting with his eyes bent down. He is in thought and contemplation. He is seeing with the inward sight. He is seeing the invisible. So sitting, Jesus is the type of all introspection and meditation and study, of all that occupation of mankind which is turned away from active human life and is dwelling on the unseen things. We recognize at once the quiet, absorbed Figure on the hillside. Do we not also recognize at once the quick response with which, in answer to the hustling feet of the approaching crowd, Christ turns and looks up, and listens and is ready for them, and gives himself in answer to their claim? He is theirs. No self-indulgence, even in the deepest thought or highest vision, even



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A LAD OF GALILEE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO SMALL
FISHES



in prayer to his Father, must make him deaf or blind to human life appealing to him and requiring his help. Therefore he lifts up his eyes (Phillips Brooks). *A great multitude.* They were Galileans on the way to the Passover at Jerusalem.—*Bread.* Or, *loaves*, RVm.

6. This verse is parenthetical.—*Prove him.* Test him.

7. *Two hundred shillings' worth.* The word in the Greek *δυναμιον* (Latin, *denarius*) denotes a coin worth about eight pence halfpenny, or nearly seventeen cents, RVm. A denarius was the pay for a day's labor.

9. *Two fishes.* Fish were dried or pickled and eaten with bread.—*But.* Upon this little word the emphasis lies. Andrew saw the poverty of the visible supply; he failed to see the richness of the invisible power. "But!" O how many precious enterprises have been suddenly and basely concluded in mid-course by a faithless "but!" (Gunsaulus).

10. *Sit down.* The Greek verb means *recline*. See Mk. 6.39, 40.—*Much grass.* It was April.—*Five thousand.* From Mt. 14.21 we learn that there were five thousand men besides the women and children.

11. *Having given thanks.* The customary thanks were, "Blessed art thou, Jehovah our God, King of the earth, who causest bread to come forth from the earth."—*He distributed to them.* The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

12. *The broken pieces.* Not the fragments left by the multitude, but the broken pieces which had been distributed.—*That nothing be lost.* A protest against needless waste.

13. *Baskets.* The Greek word *κοφινους* means the provision baskets which were carried by the Jews. Probably each of the Apostles had one.—*From the five barley loaves.* The scantiness of the store is again told to emphasize the greatness of the miracle.

14. *The prophet that cometh into the world.* See Dt. 18.15.



Jesus Multiplying the Loaves
From a Representation in the
Roman Catacombs

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

9. *Barley loaves and fishes.* Barley bread was so coarse that it was given to Roman soldiers only as a punishment, but it was the customary food of the poor in Palestine and therefore of Jesus and his company of disciples. The loaves of bread were very thin, round or oval in shape (the Arabs at the present day have the same "circles of bread"), and they were always broken, never cut. The fish were not fresh, but dried. The Greek word translated *fish* may be used for anything eaten with bread as a relish. "When the fellow are on a journey or at work in the fields, they content themselves with dry bread eaten with a few figs, raisins or dried fish," says Mr. Wilson. "The midday meal of a middle-class house in Jerusalem in the first century consisted of fish from the lake, locusts baked in flour, or honey, onions, and meat. For dessert the cheapest fruits were grapes and figs. The poor had to live more moderately. The lake fishermen, in particular, rarely tasted meat; bread, hard boiled eggs, and the produce of their fishing, with locusts and water, formed the staple of their food."

13. *Baskets.* The baskets now used in the East resemble very much those which are represented on the monuments of Egypt. They are often like our own in shape, material and workmanship. The baskets here referred to were probably the ordinary traveling baskets which the Jews took with them on a journey. They carried their provisions in them so that they might not be polluted by eating the food of the Gentiles; and it is also said that they sometimes carried hay in them, on which they slept at night. Thus they kept aloof from the Gentiles in food and lodging. This will account for the contemptuous description which Juvenal gives of the Jews, when he represents that their household goods consisted of a basket and hay.—Freeman, "Handbook."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What is a "sign," as the word is used in John's Gospel? What "signs" has he recorded thus far? What seemingly impossible feat did the sick man of Bethesda do at the command of Jesus? What did

we hear in our earlier lesson about Andrew? What did we hear in a lesson of last year about a miraculous supply of food?

Intervening Events Narrated in the Synoptic Gospels. Between the events of John 5 and 6 there are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels the plucking of grain on the Sabbath, the restoring of strength to a man's withered hand, the wide-spread fame of Jesus in Galilee, the choosing of the Twelve, the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the centurion's servant, the raising of the widow's son at Nain, John the Baptist's last message, the anointing of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus' warnings to the scribes and Pharisees, and his words about his true kindred, the parables by the sea, the stilling of the tempest, the restoring of the Gadarene demoniacs, the raising of Jairus's daughter, the restoring sight to two blind men, the second rejection at Nazareth, the mission of the Twelve, and the death of John the Baptist.

The Coming of the Five Thousand. Jesus is the Source of life—this is the thought at the close of John 5: Jesus is the Sustainer of life—this is the thought of John 6.

The miracle of feeding the five thousand is the only miracle which is recorded by all four Evangelists. The Synoptic writers give the occasion for the withdrawal to the coast of Bethsaida on the other side of the sea, which John omits. The news of the death of John the Baptist had saddened the hearts of all, and the disciples had but lately returned, weary and worn, from their first tour on which Jesus had sent them. They were all in need of rest and quiet communion one with another, and yet the people crowded around them so that "they had no leisure so much as to eat." Very tenderly Jesus said to his disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." They reached the desert place, but they found not the quiet and rest they longed for, for the people observed the direction in which the boats were going and followed on foot around the head of the lake. Whether the disciples rebelled at this intrusion we know not, but when Jesus beheld them we are told that "He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The miracle was wrought on the uninhabited northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The nearest town was *Bethsaida Julias*. Assign paragraphs 152 and 153 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"This Jesus said to prove Philip, for he himself knew what he would do." So he proves every teacher in the work which he is sharing with the Master. In that work Jesus asks you to reckon up your resources—"not to make you feel how great, but how poor they are; and so to throw yourself, in utter helplessness, upon his great power; a power great enough to bless your little store, till it feeds those who are perishing for lack of the heavenly bread. It is not your strength, but your weakness that the Master uses most. It is not your sufficiency, but your insufficiency that is the condition of success." Are you ever surprised that your knowledge produces so small an effect? Are you trusting in your own might? As long as Uzziah was weak, and knew he was weak, he was marvelously helped.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Our last two lessons have been about miracles, and today we study a third miracle. What was the miracle Jesus did for the nobleman? For the man at the pool of Bethesda? What is the miracle in our lesson today? What is a miracle? The word comes from a Latin verb which means *to wonder*. A miracle is always wonderful, full of wonder, but it is far more than this. You know that a few grains of wheat planted in the earth will grow and produce enough wheat to make bread for five thousand people; this is very wonderful, we can not understand how it takes place, but we do not call it a miracle. It occurs every day; it is one of the laws of Nature, we say, that seeds put into the earth shall produce roots and stalks and leaves and fruit. The laws of Nature are laws of God which are always in operation. When Jesus broke five loaves of bread into enough pieces to feed five thousand people he performed a miracle. One little, flat loaf of bread such as they make in Palestine would hardly be enough for

one hungry man; and five loaves could not naturally feed five thousand men. This miracle differs from the wonderful growth of wheat in being brought about, not according to the laws of God which are so common that we call them natural, but by his special will for this special time and place and people. It was God's will because it was Christ's will. A miracle is always something wonderful, and it is always brought about by God's special will for a special purpose. It always proves that God is working through the one who does a miracle.

For Older Pupils. The scene of our lesson Phillips Brooks describes. It was on the farther side of the Sea of Tiberias, a region which Christ seldom visited, a region which is today a wilderness. A multitude had followed the Lord across the water and were filling the empty place with crowd and clamor and confusion. "Curiosity was all alive. What he had done last, what he would do next, was flying about in question and answer from mouth to mouth. The scene was full of movement. Every man was on his feet. Old friends were meeting. Christ's adherents were eagerly pleading for him. The enemies of Christ were violently claiming that he was an impostor. Gestures were furious; words came fast; faces glowed; eyes sparkled; feet hurried back and forth. Such is the picture which seems to paint itself before us in the first verses of this sixth chapter of St. John.

"And then there comes a change. The midday sun grows hot. Hunger and exhaustion take possession of these excited frames. The need of rest overcomes the eagerness of action. And out of the midst of the flagging tumult comes the calm voice of Jesus, saying to his disciples who are closest to him, 'Make the men sit down.' And the disciples pass here and there through the crowd, doing their Master's will, until five thousand men are seated on the grass.

"Then a new scene appears. Quiet has come in place of the noise: repose instead of action. Faces which just now were flushed and excited have grown calm. And, what is really at the heart of all, there is a change in the whole crowd's activity. It has become receptive. It is waiting to be fed. Not only with the barley loaves and fishes. The presence of Christ is before it and it receives that. By-and-by the words of Christ fall on it and it receives them, until at last there begins to break from the seated ranks the declaration that they have indeed received him, and they whisper to one another, 'This is indeed the prophet that should come into the world!'"

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I BEING PROVED

Jesus was not Asking for Food from Philip; He was Asking for Faith.

The answer Jesus wanted would have been: "Lord, all things are possible unto thee; speak the word only, and this multitude shall be filled." But poor Philip could only begin to calculate and reckon up the cost in earthly coin! Very thoroughly did the question "prove" that disciple, and prove him to his shame.

Does not my Lord often confront me with difficulties just to prove whether I have sufficient faith in him or not? He has always a good reason for everything he does, or delays to do; and though the reason may be a merciful one, it is frequently a humbling one as well. For loss of health, for the mis-carrying of my plans, for the emptying of my home, for the frustration of my hopes, for the baffling of my selfish schemes he has always a reason: and the reason may be this, to "prove" whether I know him so well as to trust him right through all. I will try, henceforth, to see written by his hand, over all the strange and inexplicable trials of my life, this great inscription, "This he did to prove him"; and then I will write with my own hand beneath it, "I will trust, and not be afraid." I will call even the barest wilderness in my life by a new name, "Jehovah Jireh," for I am sure to see how wonderfully there "the Lord can provide." My own resources may be very small; only a few loaves and fishes. But he can make them suffice, and more than suffice, for everything. The poorest Christian upon earth might lay his head down peacefully upon the pillow every night, with more than the comfortable feelings of a millionaire, if, after thinking of his little stock, and realizing how poor it is, he would only add to it, "and Christ, and Providence, and my Father in heaven, and the power that can supply all my need, and the Love that never fails!"—G. H. Knight, in "The Master's Questions to His Disciples."

A Woman Tested. A woman came to Dr. Campbell Morgan at the close of the service one morning, and said, "Oh, I would give anything to have some living part in the work which is going on here in winning men and women to Christ; but I do not know what to do."

"Are you prepared to give the Master the five loaves and two fishes you possess?" asked Dr. Morgan. "I do not know that I have five loaves and two fishes." "Have you anything which you have used in any way specially?" "No, I do not think I have." "Well, can you sing?" "Yes, I sing at home." "Well, now, will you give the Lord your voice?" "I will."

"I shall never forget that Sunday evening"—said Dr. Morgan in recalling the conversation. "She sang the Gospel message, and that night there came out of that meeting into the inquiry-room one man. That man said to me afterwards that it was the Gospel as it was *sung* which reached his heart; and that man has been one of the mightiest workers for God in that city and country I have ever known. How was it done? A woman gave the Master what she had."

II THE BOY WHO HELPED

Helping the Master. Who was happiest in that crowd of five thousand people? Next to Jesus Christ I think it was that boy. He would never forget it, for he had helped the Master to feed five thousand people. How he would tell the story to his mother and how he would repeat it next day to everybody, to every neighbor, to every person he met.



Head of a Twelve-Year-Old Boy of the First Century, B.C.

From a Bronze Statue in the Metropolitan Museum, N. Y.

And I am here to ask you what you have brought to Jesus Christ. He does not ask loaves, and yet he may. If there is a poor family that your bread can help, you would give it them. But I want you to think of something else. What can you give to Jesus Christ? There was a little boy listening to a missionary lecture at Sunday-school one afternoon. There were other little boys, but this boy said, "When I grow up I will be a missionary, too." He forgot all about it, and indeed drifted away and was almost lost to Christ and to good things. But one evening he went to a mission service and somehow or other it all came back to him. He remembered his promise, he remembered the covenant he had made as a boy, and he came forward and

offered himself to become a missionary. Oh, there is a lad here and his name is read by and by as James Chalmers, missionary martyr and apostle of New Guinea. You see, children, Christ is not going to feed the world without your help. You too must come in, you must have your share. If I were to ask your teacher, "So and so, what about him? Has he got anything?" Yes. And perhaps the teacher will say, "Well so and so, there is not much in him, but there is a little. Five barley loaves and two small fishes." Will you help him?—Condensed from a sermon by H. Elvet Lewis.

Tony's Application of the Lesson. A young teacher told her pupils in the Italian Mission the story about the feeding of the five thousand. One of the boys rushed home to tell his mother about it, and she told him to go back and ask the teacher if it were true. He met her just as she was leaving. "Yes, Tony," she said, "it is true. Jesus needs the boys to help him. He needs boys now, so that he can do what he wants to do."

The teacher told what Tony said next week. "I tell-a my mother, and she say, if that-a true, better we help him. Dis-a week, come my mother's sister and two children to live with us, 'cause her husband, he kill-a on da railroad, and my mother say, they can't stay—we have no room, and only little maca-

roni, and few potat—not enough for any more. And they all cry, and say they want to stay. And then I think of de story, and I tell-a my mother better we help them little while. Then I think, an' I write my uncle in da country, and tell him, an' today my uncle come in town an' bring barrel potat. Then my mother cry an' say he like-a da Jesus in the story, an' he ask about Jesus, an' I tell-a da story to him, an' he say he like-a dat Jesus, an' it was da boy dat start da food coming both times, so now I know that story true."

Another Lad's Fish. "Its' no use," sighed Peter, according to a story in "Around the World," "I can't think of one single thing to do that will bring me any money to put into the missionary box. Miss Potter talked to us about giving our talents, but I haven't got any talents unless it is for going fishing." Suddenly Peter struck his hands together, "My," he exclaimed, "I never thought of that. I believe I'll try it."

So he went to the barn and got his fishing tackle, which wasn't very elaborate. Peter knew the mountain brooks the best of all the village boys, and that day he fished more carefully than he ever did before, because of the big purpose in his heart. He even went to the deep hole, where the foaming brook comes over the cliff, and there he caught his largest trout. "He will weigh half a pound if he weighs an ounce!" cried Peter. He caught many more.

Twenty-five trout, all nicely laid in cool leaves, Peter brought back to the village. "But the hardest part of my job is to come," he said. "Guess I'll try Mrs. Purington first." "O you delightful boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Purington when Peter opened his basket. "Just what I want for my city boarders."

The next Sunday when the missionary box was passed Peter put the dollar bill, all folded tightly, into it. Miss Potter looked surprised, and then she let her hands rest on Peter's shoulder and said, "Well done, Peter!"

III THAT NOTHING BE LOST

Gather up the Broken Pieces. "That nothing be lost": these words spoken first of the broken pieces of bread are symbolic of Jesus' consuming and undying interest in fragments of every kind—of time, of manhood, of every broken thing. Nothing vexed him so much as to see things perishing; it was for their sake he came. "The Son of Man," he said, speaking of himself, "came to seek and to save that which was lost"—and the word is the same as that here used for the fragments of bread.

This care for the fragments has a hundred applications in the life of Jesus. The fragments of time to him were very precious, and he did not wish that any should perish. The day was long enough—for were there not twelve hours in it?—but it was not too long, and there were not too many of them in which to do his Father's business. Therefore he gathered up its every fragment and filled it full of work or rest or prayer; for he never forgot that the night was coming when men work no more.

But dearest of all to Jesus were the broken lives of men; and here, if anywhere, was the passion of his heart that nothing might be lost. The world was full of such fragments; but Jesus was the first to see how very precious they were, and how much could be done with them. The womanhood that had been shattered by sin he restored to conscience and honor by the purity of his mighty love, so that the sinner who had been but too well known in the city was touched to tears by the sight of him, and in a penitent burst of pure and grateful devotion, fervently kissed his feet. Thus by the magic of Christ's love was many a fragment of fallen nature gathered up and tenderly put together again. Love and insight went together: love for the fragments, insight into their possibilities. His ministry was a continual gathering and restitution of the broken pieces. "Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."—Condensed from "The City with Foundations," by John Edgar McPadyen.

Value the Fragments. Betty had a bisque dolly which she loved with a devotion too deep for words. But one day she dropped her on a hardwood floor. Of course there was nothing left of her lovely head but a mass of unrecognizable fragments, and as the puppy came along at that very instant and tore her body limb from limb, the poor simulacrum was not one whit better off than if it had gone through a threshing machine.

Betty was stunned. She imitated the example of Rachel and wept, refusing to be comforted. After her grief had spent itself, she gathered up the frag-

ments. All the most important portions of the shattered anatomy having been recovered, little Betty carried these confused fragments in her arms, and sang to them as lovingly as if they still retained their identity. They were much harder to handle, however, than in their entirety, and she kept dropping them on the floor until her mother, seeing her troubles and touched by her devotion, gave her a little basket, in which she put them all very tenderly, and afterward fed them and washed them and put them to bed with no apparent idea that a doll in a thousand pieces was any less real a doll than when knit together and compacted into a single organism.

At first her mother smiled, and then she grew sober and finally cried—for a sort of parable or allegory began to take shape before the eye of her mind.

"The darling!" she said to herself. "See how she values fragments! When my treasures break, it's little enough comfort I get out of the pieces. I must have the whole of things or nothing. One after another my castles in the air have fallen to the ground and broken, and I have utterly despised their ruins. Because life has not been altogether what I dreamed, I have rejected with contempt what little portions of it have been rescued from the débris. But look at little Betty! Profound philosopher! A tiny fragment is better than nothing. A basket of pieces has some value, even though the original whole has disappeared. I'll save the pieces after this. I'll gather up the fragments into baskets. A half loaf is better than no loaf at all!"—Condensed from "Save the Pieces!" by Charles Frederic Goss, in "The Sunday School Times."

Lest Everything be Lost. As the miracles of Christ were more than mere acts of power, so the words of Christ reached farther than their direct significance. And I shall understand these words as warning us against other waste than the waste of food—as bidding us to gather other fragments than the fragments of a feast. If neither physically, nor morally, nor intellectually, you have been doing your duty—if, instead of growing better and better, you are steadily and consciously growing worse and worse—if over your soul is beginning to creep the chill of a fatal apathy, and the past-feelingness of a miserable despair,—then must we not to you alter the words of the text, not saying as Christ said to his faithful ones, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost,"—but rather, alas! with a more urgent insistence, "Gather up the fragments that remain, lest everything be lost?" Make, by God's grace, now—even now and here—a higher purpose, and ask for grace to keep to that purpose; humbly remembering that you must take the difficulty of the upward as grave punishment to be patiently borne for going downwards. So gather up the fragments that remain, lest all be lost.—F. W. Farrar, in "In the Days of Thy Youth."

How to Use Your Surplus. There is a department of the World's Sunday School Association called "The Department for Utilizing Surplus Material." Its object is to gather from those who have excess and supply those who have need. Do you know about it? Have you contributed to its good work? So many things have served their purpose in our Sunday Schools and now, though still valuable, they are in danger of being lost. These are among the things, we may be sure, which Jesus would have us gather up and pass on for further usefulness. This extract from a letter received by the Superintendent of the department from Cebu, Philippine Islands, shows how eagerly the workers there await the gifts from the Sunday-schools in the United States.

"About one hundred and fifty Sunday-schools all needed Sunday-school picture-cards. The men and women who came for Sunday-school supplies waited patiently hours until their turn came. Though some had to lose their evening meal, not one wanted to go away without the supplies. Sunday-school cards were *begged* for. I had not enough to give *even one* to each worker. With utterly inadequate supplies the workers return to their fields. Some will travel for two weeks in open boats before they can reach their fields. Others, who are still weary from two days of mountain journeying, will again face the same stony paths."

Dr. Price aptly speaks of the picture roll as "the roll that never gets stale." "These picture rolls are eagerly desired," he says, "by every missionary on every foreign field. They are used in teaching the Bible both in Sunday-schools and in the pulpit. A crowd can always be gathered on a street corner

where one of these pictures is shown, and the Gospel is preached with the pictured truth as the graphic text. The rolls thus become to many the very Bread of Life."

What surplus material can your class gather up? What fragments of time and of money can your class use in sending help and cheer to mission lands? It is not too early now to begin planning for Christmas gifts, gifts for the Leper Homes, and for the children in mission schools. (See p. 23 of our Introduction.)

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 5. The question is not, What can you do? but, What can you and God together do?—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Verse 6. The tests of life are to make, not break, us.—Dr. M. D. Babcock.

Verse 9. It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything.—Phillips Brooks.

Verse 11. Thou takest the things we know so well,
And buildest on them thy miracle,—
The heavenly on the commonplace.—Susan Coolidge.

Verse 11. In the enlargement and enrichment of personality, with its ever-widening capacity for service, I find something more amazing than anything in the story of the loaves and fishes.—Dr. Charles R. Brown.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Yield thy poor best and ask not how or why,
Lest one day seeing all about thee spread
A mighty crowd and marvelously fed,
Thy heart break out into a bitter cry:
"I might have furnished, I, yea, even I,
The two small fishes and the barley bread."

—Frederick Langbridge.

We can no more understand how the grain of wheat is multiplied than we can how Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes. Are we grateful for our daily bread? When Luther was passing a field of growing wheat he fell on his knees and prayed: "It is nothing but a miracle, O Lord, that thou bringest wheat forth out of the earth. Dear Father, help us, thy children, to receive with gratitude our daily bread."

Gather up your fragments, whether of time, money, health, opportunities, influence—and relying upon the multiplying power of God devote them to his service.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Satisfying physical hunger. See "Wanted, not Charity, but Justice," "The Outlook," July 14, 1915.

2. Gathering up the fragments: see the Third Topic and "The Outlook," Jan. 6, 1915.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What did the five thousand wish to do with Jesus after being fed? 2. Where did Jesus spend that night? 3. What peril befell the disciples? 4. How did Jesus come to them? 5. Tell the story of the giving of the manna in the wilderness. (Ex. 16.) 6. How did the Jews regard Moses? (*Guide*, p. 119.) 7. What did Jesus say to the tempter about spiritual bread? (Mt. 4.4.) 8. What did Jeremiah say about eating the words of God? (Jer. 15.16.) 9. Copy all the verses in the sixth chapter of John in which Jesus refers to himself as the Bread of Life.

Questions to Think About. 1. How was Jesus "sealed"? (*Guide*, p. 118.) 2. Does verse 27 mean that one should not work for his daily bread? What does it mean? (*Guide*, p. 118.) 3. Which one of the Beatitudes does verse 27 recall? 4. How is faith in Jesus a "work"? (*Guide*, p. 123.) 5. Explain verse 37. (*Guide*, p. 119.) 6. Why did Jesus often speak of himself in figurative language? 7. Why was the figure which he uses in this lesson especially fitting? 8. What is meant by "spiritual food"? 9. How can one feed upon Christ? 10. Why does the figure of speech about bread mean more to orientals than to us? (*Guide*, p. 120.) 11. Following the analogy of what food does for the body, what does Christ do for the soul?

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

Golden Text

Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. John 6:35

LESSON John 6:22-40: verses 24-37 printed MEMORIZE verses 32, 33

24 When the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. 25 And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, *even* God, hath sealed. 28 They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 30 They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat. 32 Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, that ye have seen me, and yet believe not. 37 All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Search for Jesus, 22-24.
- II. The Motive for the Search, 25-26.
- III. Jesus' Offer of the Bread of Life, 27-40.

24. *The multitude.* The company which had been fed (last lesson) remained at the place all night.—*Saw that Jesus was not there.* See verses 16-21.—*Into the boats.* Or, *little boats*, RVm. Driven in, no doubt, from Tiberias by the furious storm during the night, verse 18.

25. *Whence camest thou hither?* They are curious to know how he had crossed the lake.

26. *Jesus answered them.* He did not answer their question of verse 25, but he referred to their desire to find him which prompted the question.—*Not because ye saw signs.* The "signs" were miraculous proofs of his Divine mission; they had seen them only as marvels, and had not recognized their spiritual meaning. The satisfying of physical hunger was a symbol of the satisfying of spiritual hunger.—*But because ye ate of the loaves.* They followed him for the sake of the temporal blessings which his marvelous power seemed to promise them.

27. *Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life.* These words do not mean that they should not provide for temporal necessities, but that they should not be so occupied in doing this as to fail to provide for their more important spiritual necessities.—*Which the son of man shall give unto you.* My mission is to nourish, not human lives, as you seem to think, but life everlasting.—*Hath sealed.* Hath attested, authenticated. See Jn. 3:33. An Eastern potentate authenticates a written order, not by a signature, but by his seal. God authenticates his commission of Jesus as the Messiah by the works which he gives him to do.

28. *That we may work the works of God.* That we may do works pleasing to God. They are thinking of certain definite, meritorious acts which are the condition of receiving the "food which abideth."

29. *This is the work of God.* "This is the Christian answer to the Jewish question." Religion is always something that God does for us before it becomes something that we do for God. There is only one "work" which God requires: it is an act of the will which leads to the doing of all acts pleasing to God, namely, faith in Jesus the Christ.—*That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* "Of this faith I know no better definition than that of Webster's Dictionary: 'That confiding and affectionate belief in the person and work of Christ which affects the character and life, and makes a man a true Christian'" (Abbott).

30. *What then doest thou.* Then, since thou claimest to be the One whom God has sent, the Messiah. "Well, then, since you ask us to believe in you as God's messenger, give us your credentials, a sign in proof of your authority," they return in a challenging spirit.

31. *Our fathers ate the manna.* See Ex. 16; Num. 11.—*As it is written.* See Ps. 72.16; 78.24. In their thought, the Messiah must prove his claim by exceeding Moses in power: Moses gave bread day after day from heaven for forty years; Jesus gave them bread but one day, and it had not come from heaven. Said the rabbis: "Like the first redeemer (Moses) will be the last redeemer (Messiah); the first made manna descend, so the second shall make manna descend as it is written." Recall the question of the woman of Samaria about Jesus being greater than Jacob.

32. *It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven.* It was not Moses, but the Father, who gave you the manna; the manna was out of heaven, but it was not the true bread out of heaven; you have not that manna today, but the true bread may now be yours.

33. *The bread of God.* The bread of life, verse 35.—*That which cometh down out of heaven.* See Jn. 3.13.—*Unto the world.* Not to the Jews alone.

34. As the Samaritan woman, when offered the gift of God under the figure of living water, asked eagerly for it, so these people of Galilee ask for this same gift when presented to them under the figure of bread that lasts for ever.

35. *I am the bread of life.* The pronoun is emphatic. What bread can do for the body, Christ can do for the soul. See verses 48, 51, 58.—*He that cometh to me . . . he that believeth on me.* These are synonymous expressions.—*Shall not hunger . . . shall never thirst.* Every want of the soul Christ can satisfy.

36. *I said unto you.* This may refer to the words of verse 26, or to some unrecorded saying.

37. *All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me.* It was the Father's desire that all should come to Christ, Jn. 3.16; 12.32, yet some refuse to come, Jn. 5.40. "The giving, God's act; the coming, man's." "The father foresees what men will come, and, as a result of his foreknowledge, 'gives' them to Christ."—*And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* "The ancient Romans recognized what they called 'inexpiable crimes.' But Christianity knows no 'inexpiable' offences; it discloses a Mediator exercising infinite mercy and forgiveness. Grace is a golden mystery that welcomes the chief of sinners" (Watkinson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

31. *Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness.* Moses had gradually been half deified. It was taught that God counted him of as much value as all Israel. Most believed that he was five grades in knowledge above all creatures, even angels. The lower part of his body was human; the upper divine. On his entrance to paradise, God left the upper heavens and came to him, and the angels also came and ministered to him, and sang hymns before him. Even the sun, the moon, and the stars came, and craved liberty from him to shine on the world, which they could not have done had he refused.

It was thus only an expression of the public feeling of the day when Jesus was asked to repeat the descent of manna—the greatest of the miracles of Moses. It is in human nature, but, above all, in Eastern human nature, to associate high office and dignity with display and outward circumstance, and hence what must have been the popular expectations of external grandeur and majesty in the Messiah, when they saw a demigod in Moses, whom he was to resemble!

No demand for overpowering "signs" of the divine approval of a claim to be the Messiah could, in this point of view, be too great from One whose outward appearance, and whole life in other respects, so entirely contradicted the general Messianic anticipations.—Dr. Geikie, in "Life of Christ."

35. *I am the bread of life.* This figure of speech means more to orientals than it does to us, for bread is to all save the rich the very staff of life, almost the sole article of diet. "As the son of a Syrian family," writes Abraham Mitrie Rihbany in "The Atlantic Monthly," I was brought up to think of bread as possessing a mystic, sacred significance. I never would step on a piece of bread fallen on the road, but would pick it up, press it to my lips for reverence, and place it on a wall or some other place where it would not be trodden upon. What always seemed to me one of the noblest traditions of my people was their reverence for the *aish*, bread; literally, "the life-giver." The *aish* was something more than mere matter. Inasmuch as it sustained life, it was God's own life made tangible for his child, man, to feed upon. The most High himself fed our hunger."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What have we heard thus far in John's Gospel about "signs"? What signs had Jesus wrought? When did the Jews ask for a special sign? What answer did Jesus make? What did John the Baptist call Jesus? Who said that in Jesus was life, and the life was the light of men? What did Nathanael say that Jesus was? What did Jesus tell the woman of Samaria that he was?

The Galilean Crisis. The superficial enthusiasm of the people for Jesus reached its climax in Galilee after the wonderful supply of bread on the eastern shore of the lake. The excited crowd sought to take him by force and compel him to head their march to Jerusalem, there to be made king. Their zeal was becoming dangerous. Perceiving that his disciples were nothing loth to see their effort succeed, Jesus abruptly commanded the Twelve to embark and cross over to the opposite side (as we learn from Mark's Gospel). Jesus made his escape from the clamoring crowd, and spent the night in lonely vigil and prayer on the mountainside. "We shall miss something of his greatness," observes William Alexander Grist, "unless we take account of the forces of that wild and fanatical maelstrom of Jewish patriotism which, had he wavered for a single moment, would have swallowed up his little society amid a tumult of revolution and bloodshed."

The Crossing to Capernaum. "It was already dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them." In these words John shows us the disciples awaiting their Master, probably at Bethsaida. They continued their journey without him and were about half way across in the midst of a terrific wind storm when they beheld Jesus walking toward them on the lake. "It is I; be not afraid," said Jesus. He entered their boat, and soon they reached their haven.

The Disillusioning of the Multitude. The following morning the multitude departed for Capernaum in boats that had come from Tiberias, and in the synagogue there they found Jesus. They had seen the disciples leave in the boat without their Master, and they said to him in surprise, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"

"During the midnight vigil," to quote Mr. Grist, "great clearness had come to Jesus as to the irreconcilable antagonism between the popular Messianism and his own spiritual ideal, and he perceived that he could not transform the thoughts of his age beyond his immediate circle of disciples. There was revealed to him the arrival of the crucial hour of his ministry, and unhesitatingly he resolved to strip away from men's minds all illusions about himself. The moment had come for a clear, bold, unmistakable definition of his purely spiritual aim in the world. The great prophetic ideal of the Messianic Kingdom was now to be freed from the swaddling-bands of national pride and prejudice, and Jesus was to show that the true King belongs to the whole race, and that he must nourish the world by the sacrifice of himself. He deliberately provoked a controversy that was bound to issue in grumbling and strife, and even in renunciation of himself as an impracticable dreamer. He took the feeding of the multitude and treated it as a parable in action, setting forth symbolically the real spiritual relation that he sustains to the world."

- Review paragraph 51 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The attitude of the nobleman from Capernaum when he came to Jesus begging him to save his son's life could hardly be called belief in Jesus. He knew nothing of the spiritual mission of the Divine Christ: he had but heard of Jesus' miraculous power, and in his agony at the prospect of losing his son the father's heart was ready to make any venture. The result was that he himself believed and all his house, and his belief was far more than belief in a wonder-worker. "Just as an engineer first spans a broad river with a silken thread, and then finally establishes across it the king's highway resting on solid masonry and steel girders, so the initial gossamer trust of the nobleman passed into a confidence never more to be shaken by life or death." The multitude sought Jesus, not because they saw signs and comprehended their spiritual meanings, but because they had eaten the loaves and been filled. They came solely for material benefit, but their coming gave them an opportunity to gain entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us not despise a slender initial faith: it may grow into a glorious faith. Let us not expect from beginners too great a knowledge of what it means to be a Christian: with the practicing of that little knowledge they will grow into fuller knowledge. Let us not bemoan the fact that many pupils attend the Sunday School for the loaves and fishes, the food which perisheth—the Christmas gifts and the picnics, the singing and the good cheer. Their coming brings them where they have opportunity of gaining the food which abideth unto eternal life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A missionary in China became much interested in a poor couple by the name of Wang who lived ten miles away from the mission and were never absent from the services, no matter what the weather. One day she asked Mrs. Wang if she did not get very hungry before reaching home at night, for they arrived by nine in the morning and stayed till five in the afternoon.

"No," replied Mrs. Wang, "not when I have a meal of rice before starting in the morning."

"What!" exclaimed the missionary, "are there any times when you are unable to get that?"

"Yes. When our rice is gone and we have no money to get more, we have only chaff mixed with hot water into a kind of porridge."

"How do you manage to walk so far with such poor food?"

"Well, there was one day when I was so faint and tired on the way home that I sat down by the roadside and cried. My husband said weeping would do no good, and that we must get away from the main road, and go behind the hills, where the passers-by would not interrupt us in prayer. We did this, and my husband prayed that God would make the hunger of the soul more real than the hunger of the body. We were not hungry after that; I got up and walked the rest of the way home, prepared a supper of rice-husks, and after eating this we went to bed feeling quite happy."

Last week we heard about the "hunger of the body" of a great crowd of people. Where were they? How were they fed? Why did Jesus feed them? Now we shall see whether their hunger of soul was as real as their "hunger of body."

For Older Pupils. A caller noticed a small book-shelf in the office of a coal merchant. The books were worn from use—Scott's works, books of poetry, histories, etc. "Do you read books here?" he asked in surprise. "Yes," replied the merchant, "I try to find some time for them. I sell coal for a living, but I cannot live on coal." What was it Christ said to the tempter when told to create bread from stones? "Man cannot live by bread alone." That is the lesson he taught the five thousand men whom he had fed with bread.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I CUPBOARD LOVE

Ye Seek Me because Ye Ate of the Loaves. Victor Hugo's Valjean tells the same great truth. You recall that when Jean turned in at the Bishop's gate he was merely begging bread. Unkempt, unloved, unashamed

of his filthy rags, driven from the dog-kennel into which he had crawled to sleep, asking no larger gift than a crust and a corner alone, he had come to the friendly door. The Bishop would have been good enough, according to Jean's standard, if he had merely honored the petitioner's importunate appeal and given him plenty of bread. And when Jean made off with the Bishop's plate he was simply taking a little more of what, in his cynical heart, a Bishop was good for. That, however, was not the end of the story. The Jean Valjean who stands forth in the later pages of the book, one of the finest characters in all the range of fiction, had found a new use for the Bishop. He had appropriated somewhat more than bread and meat. He had discovered forgiveness to be diviner than pity. He had touched heaven in the good old man's tenderness. And he came from that second audience a new creation.

I can remember when my mother seemed to me the embodiment of useful graces. If a garment was torn, I turned to mother. Had the school day gone wrong, I confided it to my mother. Was I headsick, or heartsick, mother knew what to apply. I could not imagine how any lad could live at all without his mother. But only as I came to turn to her for more than bread and favors; only as I began to feel the domination of her gracious, beautiful life; only as I learned to call on her for the replenishment of my wasting courage and the reinvigoration of my trust in God did I begin to know what it meant to have—and lose—a mother. Oh, boys who have your mothers still, let them do something for you besides minister to your comfort and cook the things you like. You do not know the value of a mother until you let her help you be more pure and true and strong.

And so I come back to our view and use of God. There are times when we come to him for the silver quarters he gives. There are times when we treat him as the Schoolmaster who makes us learn our lessons. There are times when we come cringing to Heaven's gate for the crusts and creature comforts of God. There are times when we set our faces toward him for the smoothing of our hard couches and the lightening of our pain. But the occasions on which we turn to him for the things he loves best to bestow—an inward grace, a royal courage, an inspiration divine—are far too few, I fear. We have barely learned that God means aught besides bread.—George Clarke Peck, "Old Sins in New Clothes."

"Mistletoe Christians." During my travels in California I noticed that the vegetation was covered and throttled with mistletoe. Now the mistletoe is a parasite. It climbs over the tree or shrub and sucks the life out of it, and gets nourishment, but it remains mistletoe all the same and never changes. It does not want to become an apple-tree or a crab-tree; it only wants elevation and support and protection and nutriment. And there are professing Christians who are mistletoe Christians. They join the Church, not to become new and good men and women, but just to get all the support and prominence and nourishment and position and prestige they can. They say: "Support me, feed me; but I shall remain mistletoe to the end."—Gipsy Smith.

The Entering Door. In Japan's recent war, the Young Men's Christian Association was anxious to be about its work, and gain a foothold among the soldiers. The permission it was able to secure was that of having, among those encamped at the front, a tent where baths, hair-cutting, and like conveniences could be furnished. A barber-shop was very far below the ideal of Christian service that the Association had in view, but it was the narrow door that opened, and there was no question as to utilizing it. The barbering was faithfully done, the bathing facilities were supplied, a table where letters could be written home and a stock of books and papers were added, and that tent became immensely popular. Its fame spread, and the Association was granted new privileges and indorsed by high authorities until it was able to take up its religious work comparatively unhampered.—"Forward."

II FAITH A WORK

The Christian Answer to a Jewish Question. These Galileans had been trained in a system in which every detail of life had been marked out—what they were to do, what they were to leave undone, what things were forbidden, what things were enjoined. When such men heard Christ use the word *work*, they naturally asked, What must we do? Specify for us the

details of the labor. And he, to their utter astonishment, replies, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." It sounds like an evasion to their question—like no answer at all. In reality it both answered their question and corrected their mistake. They expected a plan for their life—a detailed manual. Christ gave them an object for their faith, which would transform their nature so that they would have a law written on their hearts, instead of a code of regulation in their hands. Do this one work—believe, and out of it all other works will grow. Let the seed of faith get rooted in the heart, and from it all the fair fruit of the spirit will spring.

Work is too often thought of as belonging only to the visible realm, as being wrought by hand or limb. Brain labor, heart labor, is often more intense, more exhausting, than hand labor. Faith is indeed a work—perhaps the hardest work of our life. It has to wrestle with unbelief, to resist the insidious attacks of doubt. We have to "hold fast our confidence," our faith, as St. Paul says. Men often speak of faith as if it were the easiest of all things to be obtained; as if they had only to be passive and it would be awakened in their hearts. It is neither awakened nor sustained without inward spiritual labor.—Garrett Horder.

How Faith is a Work. An oft-quoted definition of faith is this: "Faith is an act by which one person, a sinner, commits himself to another Person, a Savior." What does this word "commit" mean? You are in need of a physician's help and you go to him and say, "I commit myself to your care." The physician tells you to take a certain medicine. "Oh, no," you answer, "I believe in you, I am trusting myself to you, but I will not take your medicine." Does he think that you committed yourself to his care, as you say? You say that you believe in Jesus Christ, you have committed yourself to him as your Savior. Christ bids you follow him, he says that he is the Way, the Truth, the Light. "Oh, no," you answer, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, I have accepted him as my Savior, and I am trusting him to save me from my sins. This is what faith means, it is a passive state, it requires no action on my part, I do not need to follow him and try to pattern my life after him, all I need to do is to trust his word." Will Christ think you have faith in him as you say?

There are two aspects to our Christian faith, and we are in danger of remembering only the one. Faith in Christ is the acceptance of certain truths in regard to him, and is an act of the intellect; it is also committing oneself to him in perfect loyalty, and endeavoring to follow his teaching and example, and is an act of the will. An eminent minister has said that "Faith in Christ is this: Such as he is I want to be; his is the kind of character I want to possess; his is the kind of life I want to live; his is the kind of blessedness I desire for myself and for others." True faith in Christ can mean no less than this, for if we believe in him we believe in his life and his teaching, and this is what he taught, that we are to follow him, take his yoke upon us, do his will. "A man may believe what creed he will, yet if this is not in his heart he has not faith in Christ. The mere vision of a Christ without the vigorous attempt to reproduce the Christ, is sentimentality in religion, and we are not saved by sentimentality."

During the Civil War a man brought a vest to President Lincoln which he claimed was bullet proof, and he wanted the President to order such vests for the soldiers. "Put on the vest," said Lincoln, "and stand off and let a man fire at you with a rifle. If your vest stands this test, I will consider it." The man was unwilling to submit to the test, and no more was heard about his invention. If we have faith in Christ we shall not only be willing but eager to prove it by putting him to the test, "taking up the whole armor of God that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

III I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Jesus Christ is a Necessity. When Christ likened himself to bread he took one of those homely illustrations which he delighted to use. For bread is the simplest, commonest, and most universal food in the world. Some plants are limited by climate, or confined to some special zone of vegetation; but corn can grow in nearly every populated region. Some kinds of food only appeal to an educated palate: they are caviare to the general. But we

all eat bread, from the epicure to the starveling; we find it on every table and at every meal. Certain sorts of food can only be had in particular months of the year; but bread is never out of season from January to December. Some dishes and dainties we can dispense with: they are costly, we reserve them for banquets, they furnish the tables at a feast. But this belongs to the diet of the masses and the classes alike; even a pauper child eats day by day his daily bread.

When our Lord called himself the Bread of life he was thinking of the five barley loaves with which he had fed a hungry crowd the day before. It was plain fare, some of us might call it coarse; barley bread is still eaten by peasants all over Europe. But Christ did not disdain to compare himself to the simplest and commonest kind of food. He bids us receive him as our prime necessity, as the staff of our inward life. He calls aloud, not merely to the noble and the educated, but to a world of hungry men and women; "Come unto me, and I will refresh you."

Here is one cardinal difference between Jesus Christ and other prophets and teachers, as also between the Bible and other books. Human systems and philosophies, framed by art and man's device, are only fit for superior persons. They are too fine for humble folk. They make no provision for the elemental wants of mankind. They come not to call sinners, but the righteous—the intellectual aristocracy, the spiritual élite. While for the dim multitude of ordinary men and women they have no message of hope and no mission of mercy. Here is the capital defect, the distinctive failure of these ingenious theories of life: they lack the great universal note, they never come home to all sorts and conditions of humanity. Alone in history Christ has dared to call himself the Bread of the whole world.

Again, this phrase not only shows us how simple and catholic the Gospel is, but also points to the conditions on which the Gospel can be received. The natural state which requires food is hunger; and a healthy man will refuse to eat bread unless it be to satisfy his appetite. Not otherwise is the condition for receiving the Bread which comes down from heaven. Blessed are they that hunger, for they shall be filled. Our inward longing for God carries within itself the pledge of its own satisfaction. If his children ask bread, they can never be finally denied or disappointed.

This phrase, the Bread of Life, suggests the assimilation of the Gospel. Bread is no use to me so long as I only look at it and talk about it; I must eat it. What doth it profit a hungry man if you merely explain to him your ideas about food reform, or tell him how bread ought to be made, or let him look into a baker's shop-window? He must eat before he can be strengthened and satisfied. Bread, to nourish me, must be taken up into my flesh and blood and become not only mine, but a part of me.

This truth has spiritual applications. Jesus Christ himself profits us nothing, so long as he is only some One outside of us and apart from us. The pages of the New Testament present him to our hearts: but we must receive him personally and appropriate him by an act of faith. Truth, to nourish me, must be made a living part of my nature. It must be spiritually assimilated before it can give me spiritual strength. It must become, not only mine, but me.

This is one of the mysterious realities so difficult in theory, which becomes easy and natural in experience. The wisest physiologist cannot perfectly explain by what subtle chemistry physical food is transformed into blood and nerve and muscle; but this is done daily in the experience of the human race, although not one person in a million so much as thinks about the process. Even so Jesus Christ is made the Bread of Life to multitudes of simple souls who can never explain their experience of that mysterious union which makes them one with his redeeming Love. Nevertheless they feed on the bread which came down from heaven, and they confess the ineffable fellowship, concerning which the Apostle said; "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is a mystery which the poor in spirit enter into, an experience in which the humble are at home. Day by day he imparts himself to the faithful soul: he gives us our daily Bread.—Condensed from an Editorial in "The Bible in the World."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 26. The wheat field supports the body, but it does this in the hope that the body will support the soul.—David Swing.

Verse 27. The longest bread-line in the world is that of the hungry-hearted—can't you take a loaf?—Dr. G. W. Bull.

Verse 29. Believing Jesus is the great achievement of life.—S. D. Gordon.

Verse 29. To believe on Christ is initial faith; to receive him is appropriating faith; to understand him is intelligent faith; to assimilate him is active faith.—Cornelius Woelfkin.

Verse 35. He who feeds on Christ becomes Christlike, as the silkworm takes the hue of the leaves on which it browses.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Spiritual life is not self-sustaining. How long can a man live without food and water? He can not sustain himself, his strength and his very life must be sustained by the food he eats. It is just as true that his spiritual life can not sustain itself. Many people live as though they thought religion a luxury, cake instead of bread, as Henry Ward Beecher expresses it, and they cut their cake into small pieces to be passed around when there is company instead of treating it as common bread to be used every hour.

Merely reading over a certain number of verses in the Bible daily without appropriating to one's self their meaning is not feeding on the word of God; one must be able to say with an aged Chinaman, "My heart ate up the good news as I read." Our table may be bountifully supplied with food, but if we merely look at it, but do not taste it, it can do us no good. There is a certain diseased condition of the body which sometimes prevents the food taken from being turned into flesh and blood, and a sufferer from "insufficient nourishment" may die, no matter how much food he eats. The Bread of Life is not Bread for us unless we "take and eat," and Christ's strength has not become our strength unless it shows itself in deeds that are Christlike.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Human responsibility in the presence of Jesus as the Revealer of the will of God, and as the Savior of men. See Professor James's essay on "The Will to Believe"; Dr. Campbell Morgan's "The Teaching of Christ," Chapter IV.
2. The Bread of Life. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the result of Jesus' offer of himself as the Bread of Life? 2. Read chapter seven of John's Gospel. 3. When the Jews sought to kill Jesus where did he go? 4. At what feast did Jesus return to Jerusalem? 5. What were the people there saying about him? 6. When Jesus taught in the Temple, what surprised the leaders? 7. What surprised the people? 8. What did the chief priests and the Pharisees order the officers to do? 9. Why did the latter not carry out the order? 10. What did Nicodemus say, and what effect did his words have? 11. Where were the words of our lesson spoken? 12. What is said about "abiding in Christ's word" in Jn. 15:7 and 2 Jn. 9? 13. What do Mt. 9:6; 26:27, 28 say about Christ and sin?

Questions to Think About. 1. To what does "again" refer? 2. What does it mean to "abide in Christ's word"? (*Guide*, p. 126.) 3. How shall the truth make you free? (*Guide*, p. 126.) 4. Was it true that the Jews had "never been in bondage to any nation"? 5. Were they in bondage to any power at the time? 6. How could they make this statement? (*Guide*, p. 127.) 7. What is the force of "Verily, verily"? 8. What is the force of the "yet" clause in verse 37? (*Guide*, p. 127.) 9. What is the meaning of verse 57? (*Guide*, p. 127.) 10. What is the meaning of verse 58? (*Guide*, p. 127.) 11. What counsel of Paul's to the Romans does verse 12 recall? (Rom. 13:12.) 12. When did Jesus say, "Ye are the light of the world," and what did he mean? (Mt. 5:14.) 13. In what ways may one be the bondservant of sin? 14. Is every one the servant of some master? 15. Why should boys sign the pledge? 16. Why should girls sign the pledge?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Whittier's, "The Light that is Felt," p. 130.

In your Note-Book write "X Jesus the Bread of Life."

JESUS SAVES FROM SIN (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Golden Text

If therefore the Son shall make you free,
ye shall be free indeed. John 8.36

LESSON John 8.12, 28-37, 56-59: verses 12, 31-37, 56-58 printed
MEMORIZE verses 31, 32

12 Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, *then* are ye truly my disciples; 32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. 35 And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. 36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed: yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. 57 The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Witness Borne by Jesus to Himself, 12-20.
- II. A Warning of the Consequences of Unbelief, 21-30.
- III. True Freedom and Spiritual Sonship, 31-59.

12. *Again.* Verses 8.12-10.21 are evidently a continuation of the narrative of the Feast of Tabernacles, which has been interrupted by 7.52-8.11.—*I am the light of the world.* See Isa. 9.2; 42.6; Lk. 1.78, 79; 2.32. On the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (and possibly on other days), the two colossal golden candlesticks in the Court of the Women were lighted to recall the light of the pillar of fire in the wilderness, and it was fitting, therefore, that Jesus should contrast himself with these and all other lights. See "Light from Oriental Life." All other men, however burning and shining their light, flicker and die out into extinction, and but for a season can the world rejoice in any of their beams. But this Jesus dominates the ages, and is as fresh today, in spite of all that men say, as he was eighteen centuries ago." (Ian Mac-laren).—*The light of life.* "My guidance which leads to life eternal."

31. *Those Jews that had believed him.* Who had believed his words of verses 24-26, that he is the Messiah.—*If ye abide in my word.* See Jn. 15.7; 2 Jn. 9. If you surrender yourselves wholly to my guidance, and make my words the standard of your conduct.—*Then are ye truly my disciples.* It was not enough for those men to believe that he spoke the truth in claiming to be the Messiah; they must accept him as their Messiah.

32. *And ye shall know the truth.* Jesus' word, last verse, is the truth. So in Ps. 119.42 "the law is the truth." A little earlier Jesus had said: "If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself," Jn. 7.17.—*And the truth shall make you free.* Free indeed, verse 36. They who were intellectually and morally free, though in bondage to man, were more truly free than they who were not politically enslaved but were the bondservants of sin. "A good man, though he were a slave, is yet free; whereas, a wicked man, though he were a king, is yet enslaved" (Augustine).

33. *We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man.* They had been successively under the dominion of Egypt, Babylon, and Syria, and now are in subjection to Rome. What do their words mean? They are indignant, for their pride is touched, and as descendants of Abraham they declare themselves superior to the Romans to whom they are subject politically, whose legions are quartered in their holy city.

34. *Verily, verily. A solemn way of emphasizing the succeeding thought.—Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin.* Jesus explains that the freedom of which he spoke was freedom from sin, and that he who habitually sins is enslaved.

35. The slave might be sold or expelled from the house at the will of his master, but the son was the heir, second only to the master of the house. "Between slave and master there is no one point in common" (Aristotle).

37-40. *I know that ye are Abraham's seed.* They were the physical descendants of Abraham, Jesus admits.—*Yet ye seek to kill me.* Abraham was "the father of the faithful"; they are not Abraham's spiritual descendants, or they would do the works of Abraham: this did not Abraham, verses 39, 40.—*Hath not free course in you.* They had believed him for a time, but the belief had not taken deep root and had died, illustrating those in the parable of the sower who had no root in themselves and endured only for a time, Mt. 13.20.21.

37. *Yet ye seek to kill me.* Although lineal descendants of Abraham, their desire to kill him, the promised seed of Abraham, proved them to be no true children of Abraham.

56. *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.* Abraham's great distinction, that which was counted unto him for righteousness, was his abiding faith in the promise made to him, that from his race should come One who would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. He rejoiced in the certainty of the fulfilment of the promise, rejoiced to see the day of Christ.—*And he saw it, and was glad.* He saw in prophetic vision.

57. *The Jews therefore said.* Possibly they understood Jesus' remarks as a claim that he was living on the earth in the time of Abraham, but more probably they only affected such an understanding.

58. *Before Abraham was, I am.* Observe that he does not say, Before Abraham was, I was. He did not claim priority of human existence; he claimed eternal existence, equality with God. He appropriated to himself the name by which God had revealed himself to Moses, I AM, Ex. 3.14. The Jews emphasized the value of anything by asserting its preexistence: in this way they spoke of their Law and of their Temple, not meaning that either had always existed, but that each was of unspeakable value. In a similar way, I think, Jesus asserted his value, his oneness with the Father.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

12. *I am the light of the world.* The rabbis said: "The Israelites said to God, O Lord of the universe, thou commandest us to light lamps to thee, yet thou art the Light of the World; and with thee the light dwelleth." The Sanhedrists were especially offended because Jesus arrogated to himself what they ascribed only to God.

It was customary to light two brilliant lamps on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and to this many refer Jesus' use of this figure. But it was now the day after the last great day of the Feast, and Dr. Clarke refers it rather to the following custom. The Jews added a ninth day to this Feast, which they termed, "The feast of joy for the law": and on that day it was their custom to take all the sacred books out of the chest where they had been deposited, and put a lighted candle in their place, in allusion to Prov. 6.23 or to Ps. 119.115.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What verse of the Gospel of John have we studied which declares that there never was a time when Christ was not? By what one descriptive word has Jesus expressed his nature and work in earlier lessons? What does the first chapter of Revelation—a lesson of last year—say about him who freed (loosed) us from sin and what he made us to be? Where were Paul and Silas imprisoned when yet their souls were free? (Another lesson of last year.)

The Result of Jesus' Offer of Himself as the Bread of Life. The Jews were offended at Jesus' claim to be the Bread of Life, the revelation of God to man. Did they not know his father and mother? "Loaves, manna, Moses—things—these were intelligible to them, but life—no." Many of the disciples left him, and Jesus said to the Twelve, "Would ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered for them all, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

Before the Feast of Tabernacles. The Jews sought to kill Jesus and he left Judea for Galilee. What happened during the next six months Matthew records in chapters 15-18.

Opinion about Jesus in a State of Transition. The Feast of Tabernacles drew near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. There the crowd was discussing him; some said, "He is a good man"; others said, "No, he is leading the multitude astray." Jesus went into the temple and taught, and the leaders were amazed at his superiority. The people of Jerusalem marveled that the priests, who were so bitter against him, allowed him to preach, and then wondered a little if the latter had discovered that he was the Messiah. This inference they quickly rejected, for did they not know his origin? Then Jesus answered their thought, and said that though they knew him they did not know him, for he was sent by God. Some of them were angered and wished to seize him, but others believed him.

Antagonism of the Chief Priests and Pharisees. On the last day of the Feast Jesus cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Again the multitude was divided concerning him. The chief priests and Pharisees had sent officers to seize him, but the latter returned without Jesus and made their report to the Sanhedrin. "Never man so spake," they said: they could not arrest him. One man in the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus, asked if they would violate the law: "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" "Art thou also of Galilee?" they said scoffingly to him.

The Woman Taken in Sin. After a night on the Mount of Olives, Jesus returned to Jerusalem and the Temple and taught the people. The scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman guilty of adultery and asked whether she should be stoned. Their motive was, no doubt, to get him into trouble with the civil authority, for Jesus had no civil right to act as magistrate. Jesus never allowed himself to be drawn into such a difficulty: recall his words in the case of the brothers who asked him to settle their difficulty as to property, and his answer to the Pharisees who asked if it were right to pay tribute to Cæsar. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," was Jesus' declaration, and in confusion the woman's accusers all left. To the woman Jesus said, "From henceforth sin no more."

The Claims of Jesus. Then Jesus further revealed himself to the multitude around him. His revelation of himself as the Light of the World, The Liberator from Sin, the Eternal Christ, is our day's lesson.

The Place of Our Lesson. It was in the Court of the Women, where the Treasury was (verse 20), that Jesus taught.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"If ye abide." Instance a Sunday-school teacher. A man or woman agrees to take charge of a class. At the outset all moves easily and promptly. There is always a zest incident to new work, even if it is hard work. But an element of monotony will eventually insinuate itself into the best service. Even gospel machinery needs the constant lubrication of fresh impulse, and the fresh impulse is not always forthcoming. Sweet pertinacity is almost as rare as it is needful. And so, as the months go on, the tax is felt more heavily. The position becomes irksome. Irregularity in attendance ensues. The tenure becomes more and more feeble. It begins to be a question who teaches that class, or whether anybody does.—Dr. Parkhurst, in "Sunday School Journal."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At the entrance of Odessa Harbor there is a lighthouse made in the form of a statue of Christ. The left hand holds a

cross above the head of the figure, and from this cross shines out the bright light which makes the harbor safe in the darkest night. In our lesson today we see Jesus himself standing and offering himself as the Light of the World. What does the first verse say those that follow him will have? What does this mean?

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

✓ **Christ Rises on the World.** When the sun rose this morning it found the world here. It found the world in darkness, torpid and heavy and asleep; with powers all wrapped up in sluggishness; with life that was hardly better or more alive than death. The sun found this great, sleeping world and woke it. It bade it be itself. It quickened every slow and sluggish faculty. It called to the dull streams, and said, "Be quick," to the dull birds and bade them sing; to the dull fields and made them grow; to the dull men and bade them talk and think and work. It flashed electric invitation to the whole mass of sleeping power which really was the world, and summoned it to action. It glorified, intensified, fulfilled the earth; so that with the sun's work incomplete, with part of the earth illuminated and the rest lying in the darkness still, we can most easily conceive of the dark region looking in its half-light drowsily over to the region which was flooded with light, and saying, "There, there is the true earth! That is the real planet. In light and not in darkness the earth truly is itself."

That is the Parable of the Light. And now it seems to me to be of all importance to remember and assert all that to be distinctly a true parable of Christ. He says it is: "I am the Light of the World." Christ rises on a soul. Christ rises on the world. I speak in crude and superficial language. For the moment I make no account of the deep and sacred truth—the truth which alone is finally and absolutely true—that Christ has always been with every soul and all the world. I talk in crude and superficial words, and say Christ comes to any soul or to the world. What is it that happens? If the figure of the Light is true, Christ when he comes finds the soul or the world really existent, really having within itself its holiest capabilities, really moving, though dimly and darkly, in spite of all its hindrances, in its true directions; and what he does for it is to quicken it through and through, to sound the bugle of its true life in its ears, to make it feel the nobleness of movements which have seemed to it ignoble, the hopefulness of impulses which have seemed hopeless, to bid it be itself.—Condensed from the "Light of the World," by Phillips Brooks.

✓ **We Can Not Do without the Light.** Some years ago an institution for the blind was erected in one of our large towns. The committee decided that as the building was for the blind, for those who could not see, there was only a waste of money and no reason in going to the expense of windows. Scientific ventilation and heating were provided, but no windows, because, as the committee very logically put it, it was no use in the world providing light for those who cannot see it.

Accordingly the new Blind Asylum was opened, and the poor sightless patients settled in the house. Things did not go well with them. They began to sicken one after another; a great languor fell on them, they felt always distressed and restless, craving for something they hardly knew what; and after one or two had died and all were ill, the committee sat on the matter, and resolved to open windows. Then the sun poured in, and the white faces of the pupils recovered color, and their flagging energies revived, the depressed spirits recovered, and health and rest returned.

It seems to me that this is not unlike the condition of a vast number of people. Christ Jesus is the Sun, the Light of the World. It is he who gives health and rest to the heart, and fills the soul with that peace which passeth man's understanding, but there are a good number who in their wisdom think we can do without him. They shut themselves in and shut him out. They cannot see Jesus, the Light of the World; therefore they live without him.—S. Baring Gould.

The Light that Is Felt.

✓ A tender child of summers three,
Seeking her little bed at night,
Paused on the dark stair timidly.
"Oh, mother! take my hand," said she,
"And then the dark will all be light."

We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in thine, the night is day
And there is darkness nevermore.

Reach downward to the sunless days,
Wherein our guides are blind as we,
And faith is small and hope delays;
Take thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of thee!

—Whittier.

Conclusion

I Need the Light. Christ is the light and I need him. When? Where? I need the light in the unknown day of life. If I interpret myself aright I am in need of three great, primary things: I want to see the right way, I want to love it, and want power to walk in it. The Light of Life shall satisfy all these needs and equip me throughout my pilgrimages. Our scientific papers have been recently telling us of a great experiment which has been tried in America. A vast machine was invented in the shape of a gigantic windmill, the arms being composed of reflectors catching the light of the sun. The concentrated light, in the form of heat, was then made to generate steam, and the steam was used to drive complicated machinery.

Now in this wonderful invention we have illustrated the process of transformation by which light is converted into heat and heat into motion. In light we have the secret of fire, and in fire we have the secret of movement. So that when my Lord uses the figure of light I may find in its spiritual suggestion satisfaction for all other needs of my life. "I am the light," not only to make lucid but to make fervid, not only to make fervid but to make operative. The light illumines; the light kindles; the light empowers. The Lord brings to me light that I may know, warmth that I may feel, and power that I may do. He satisfies the mind, he inflames the desire, he communicates energy to the will.

I shall need the light in the unknown night of death. What does my Lord do in the hour of death to break up the reign of darkness? He gives us the cheer of sovereignty. "All things are yours . . . death!" Then I do not belong to death? No, death belongs to me. Death is not my master, he is my servant. He is made to minister to me in the hour of translation, and I shall not be enslaved by his approach. That was a true and beautiful word uttered by Mrs. Booth when she was passing home: "The waters are rising, but I am not sinking!" Death was her minister, floating her forward to glory. "All things are yours . . . death." And my Lord further softens the night by the gracious light of fellowship. "I will be with thee."

I shall need the light in the unknown morrow beyond. And what about the morrow? When the river is crossed, is there any light upon the regions beyond? Am I to gaze into blackness, impenetrable, inscrutable? "I am the light." What kind of light does he give me here? "In my Father's house!" Is there not a softening gleam in the very phrase? Look here for a sheaf of rays of welcome light. "In my Father's house," there is our habitation! "I go to prepare a place for you," there is the preparation for us! "I will receive you unto myself," there is a welcome for us! Does not this throw the soft light of the morning on the Beyond? The same light which has been given to me along the way of time will shine upon me in the realms of the new day. "The Lord God is the light thereof." So, you see, it is Jesus all the way; my light today, tonight, tomorrow!—Condensed from a chapter in "The Silver Lining," by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

II THE SLAVERY OF SIN

Who Are Slaves? Slaves are very different from servants. A servant is paid for his work, and can leave it at his will. But a slave is the property of

his master, who can do just as he likes with him—beat him, sell him, or even kill him.

The history of the nations of the world tells us of many cruelties practised by slave dealers. England was the first country to make laws forbidding any of her people to have slaves. It was only a little more than a hundred years ago that such a law was passed. It is, as you know, only about half a century since our country gave up slavery. Even yet among heathen nations slavery exists, and our missionaries tell us sad tales of what they see. It is the religion of Jesus which puts an end to slavery and cruelty of all kinds, for they are quite contrary to his law of love.

Perhaps you will say: "What is the use of telling us all this, when there are no slaves in our land now?" True, there are no slaves of the kind we have been talking about, but there are many slaves for all that! Anything that gets the mastery makes slaves of people. For instance, strong drink makes slaves of many who take it. They want it more and more, until they are quite overcome by it, saying and doing things they never would have done had it not enslaved them. We often read also of men being "slaves to the pipe." The wise course to follow, when we know that a thing in the end will make slaves of us, is never to begin to use it, then we shall be safe.

There are many who are slaves to bad habits, such as ill-temper, or lying, or unkindness. I knew a lady who was such a slave to the bad habit of taking things that were not her own, that she had to be watched if she went into a shop, and she said it began when she was a little girl and used to take lumps of sugar from her mother's cupboard. How strange it is that all are not willing to be freed from such dreadful slavery!

A man walking through a slave-market saw a fine-looking man about to be sold, and in pity paid the price for him and said, "Now you may go free"; but the man, in his gratitude, threw himself down at the feet of his rescuer and said: "No, I will never leave you; let me serve you as long as I live." What have we done for our Savior, who suffered so much, and died in order to free us from sin? The apostles loved to call themselves the slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Jesus said, "Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends"; and to go back to our text, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Give yourselves to Christ, as his purchased slaves, and he will take you for his friends.—E. J. Banks.

Wherein Essential Slavery Lies. True freedom is not freedom from law; he is a slave indeed who obeys only force, fatalism, and caprice. Freedom comes with the knowledge of law and harmony with it; and he who consciously and sympathetically fulfils the highest law of his being is "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." But to be governed from below is the essential slavery. To obey only animal impulses, to seek sensuous pleasure, to hope for nothing beyond social promotion, to find our motive and end in earthly things, and, in a word, to surrender ourselves to the fatalism of circumstance, is an infinitely worse slavery than to be bound hand and foot. In this cruel bondage thousands live and die without one great thought, principle, or hope in their maimed and fettered life.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in "The Bane and The Antidote."

Enslaved by Drink. The forms of sin are innumerable, and all sin, Jesus said, enslaves. But there is one particular form of sin which by common consent we speak of as enslaving, and that is drunkenness. A drunkard is the slave of his appetite, we say. And what bondage is his! Self-respect, honor, will power, money, health, friends, moral and spiritual life—all are shackled by one who becomes this sort of slave. So it is fitting that this lesson should be chosen for our quarterly temperance lesson.

Japan has issued a striking poster of such slaves. It is entitled "The Grand Procession of the Victims of Alcohol." Emerging from a huge barrel is a long line of people marching past under the lash of "the evil spirit of alcohol." The various groups are numbered, and at the bottom of the poster they are described as criminals, paupers, insane, consumptive, depraved students, warriors and gentlemen, and corrupt members of parliament.

Beware of the First Step. Every boy has seen some wretched drunkard, with his bleared eyes and broken gait, his rags and filth, shamelessly and pitifully pleading for a few pennies with which to buy a drink. No one can look on that sight, common as it is, without a shudder. Yet there was a time when

every such pitiful being was free from the desire for drink. For a time he took his glass in moderation, until suddenly a hidden inheritance from some ancestor, hitherto unsuspected, awoke in him and drove him headlong. No one knows whether that taint is in his blood. Yet everywhere men are saying, "O, I shall never be a drunkard! I can take care of myself."

So it was that the good swimmers thought as they swam to a point beyond their strength. So it was that poor wretch thought in the days when he drank—before it was too late.

No human soul can go down until he starts down. He never can start down until he takes his first step down. We are not often called upon to decide in a single moment whether we shall become great criminals. We are called upon every day to decide whether we shall take a step in that direction. It is the first step that ought to be our concern. Remember the swimmers everywhere in the great Sea of Life who so confidently swam beyond their strength. Overconfidence is the forerunner of disaster. Be afraid of the first step down!—Condensed from "The Youth's Companion."

Enslaved by Cigarettes. "I have found that cigarette smoking is one of the worst habits a growing boy can acquire. It hinders his growth, it retards his intellectual development, and, worst of all, it weakens his will, and thus renders him less capable of resisting temptation to evil courses.—The Superintendent of New York City Schools.

III FREEDOM THROUGH CHRIST

✓ **Jesus Christ the Liberator.** It was a just cause of regret at the World's Exposition in Chicago, that President Eliot left out of the words he selected for the Peristyle the whole core of the sentence of Jesus, part of which he wrote there. "And ye shall know the truth," he wrote, "and the truth shall make you free." It was not a fair quotation. "If ye abide in my word, then shall ye be my disciple indeed, and ye shall (then) know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." President Jordan of Leland Stanford University is reported to have said once that, so far as he could see, the life which declared itself free to live laxly or to live with a low standard was in the most degraded sort of bondage which he could imagine. To do my own will is no freedom; to do the will of some other man as blind as I is no liberty. The only liberty to be found in this world is to be found in the emancipation of the bondage of God. They are free, who, having his word in them, become his disciples indeed and are made free by his truth.—Robert E. Speer.

No Bondage in Obedience to God's Laws. "The bond-servant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever." The slave has become a son, and the will of the Father is worked out in affection which is perfect liberty. There is no longer even any sense of bondage to the letter of the law; let us say that in the energy of love law is forgotten and obedience becomes delight.

✓ Ruskin was fond of telling this story about the poet-laureate. An intimate friend of the poet set himself to find out all the rules of Tennyson's versification, and collected from his poems an immense number of laws and examples. "Look here," said the friend, "what wonderful laws you observed!" "It's all true," replied the poet; "I do observe them, but I never knew it." A feeble poet would have known a great deal more about metrical rule and how painfully he managed to comply with it, but in the fulness of his genius Tennyson observed all the wonderful laws, being unconscious of them. It is much like this with believing souls filled with the power and love of Christ—almost unconsciously do they observe the highest law in its manifold obligations. The noblest impulses of the soul freely fulfil themselves, and in fulfilling themselves fulfil the law. The law gendereth to bondage, but in transcending love to God and man the law becomes the very poetry and music of life.—W. L. Watkinson, in "The Bane and the Antidote."

Ye Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free. "It's hard enough to do right when we know what the right is," said Jack Graham to his rector, "but it seems the thing is needlessly complicated when it is so difficult to find out what the right is. Why doesn't God give some sign to show men what he would have them do? I see all kinds of opinions in the world of what men think God wants. One religious leader says God wants this, and another says he wants something else. Sincere but utterly

opposed opinions are in conflict all about us. Why doesn't God say which is right?"

Doctor Brown had listened attentively to his young friend. "Well," said he, "suppose God *did* tell, suppose he told it clearly and unmistakably? Suppose when we left our houses, step by step the trail should be marked for us miraculously where God would have us go, something as boys follow the trail in hare and hounds? What would the result be? Why, about all the devout life would demand would be the use of our physical eyes! Religion, instead of taxing every spiritual power that a human being possesses, would consist in looking for a piece of paper. Every element of risk and speculation would be gone. We shouldn't be called on to use our intelligence. Religious living would turn us all into mechanical machines. Every element of the heroic would be eliminated from men's lives. We should be better off with no religion at all if that were the effect religion were to have upon the race!"

"Of course," returned Jack, "such detailed instructions would destroy human initiative. But without such detail, why can't God make clear the main essentials of righteousness?"

"That is exactly what he has done," returned the doctor. "God has told every age. He told Abraham the truth for *his* time. He told David the higher truth for his time. He told Isaiah the still greater truth for *his* time. Through his Son he gave the fundamental truths that each age must interpret and apply to its own time, the truths that are the lasting principles for all time and for eternity. In academic discussion men may differ in their interpretations of them, but practically, any man who wants to know can find what God's will is for his life. You, Jack Graham, are never seriously confused as to what is right or wrong; you know—or if you don't, you can find out if you will."—"Youth's Companion."

SENTENCE SERMONS

☞ Verse 12. The beauty of the earth is not its own; it is just the beauty of the light which it reflects. The green of these leaves and grass is not their own; they reflect the green of the sunlight, and absorb the red rays. But the lily throws them all back and is white with the beauty of perfect light—a true figure: all the gentleness and patience, all the purity and hope and faith and love in the whole world is but the reflection of Christ's glory.—Charles McTyeire Bishop.

☞ Verse 32. Education is turning the soul toward the light.—Plato.

Verse 37. When one claims merit for himself on the ground of his pedigree, his claims should at least be supported by the reappearance in him of some of the noble ancestral traits that distinguished his great forefathers.—Dau.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

All shrubs and flowers turn toward the sun, whence streams for them light and life. So our hearts should turn toward Christ, for from him streams the light of life. Recall Holman Hunt's picture of "The Light of the World": is it outside your door that the Lord is waiting?

"What shall we say or do in answer to Christ's claim? Shall we join these Jews and pick up stones to cast at him, or shall we, as we contemplate the moving story of the marvelous achievements of this Person confess with the centurion, 'Truly this man is the Son of God?'"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The marvelous claims of Jesus.
2. Freedom through Christ. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Ask pupils to read the first eight chapters of the book of John through at one time. Let them review the information learned about the Gospel of John, and prepare whatever special work you select for Review Sunday.

In Note-Books write "XI Jesus Saves from Sin."

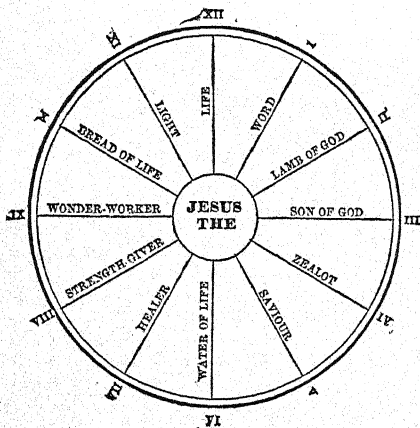
REVIEW. JESUS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Golden Text

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me. John 14.6

READ John 14.1-14

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW



- I. The **W**ord of God
 orld's Redeemer
- II. The **L**ord Jesus the
 amb of God
- III. **F**inding
 ollowing Christ
- IV. The Temple God's Home
 Heart Temple
- V. The **S**on of God is the
 avior of the World
- VI. The **W**oman offered the
 water of life
- VII. A **F**ather's prayer of
 aith rewarded
- VIII. The **S**ick healed on the
 Sabbath day
- IX. **F**ive thousand
 ed miraculously
- X. **B**read of life
 roken for us
- XI. The **L**ight of the World
 iberates from sin

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

For a written review, copy each quotation below on a separate sheet of paper, as many of each as there are pupils in your class, and give one to each pupil. After he has written a brief account of the lesson to which the quotation alludes, let him have another quotation.

As an oral review much interest will be aroused by letting all who recognize the allusion signify this after the reading of each quotation. Call for the statement.

Wherever through the ages rise
The altars of self-sacrifice,
Where love its arms has opened wide
Or man for man has calmly died,
I see the same white wings outspread
That hovered o'er the Master's head.

—Whittier.

The immigrants that come to us ought to have plenty of bread to eat and enough fragments left over to be worth picking up, for while in the bread is the living, in the fragments is the life. To them America means economic fragments.—Edward A. Steiner.

The Word was first, says the revelation:
Justice is older than error or strife;
The Word preceded the Incarnation
As symbol and type of law and life.

—John Boyle O'Reilly.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" is a declaration on the part of Jesus that in his system of salvation man is not to be passive.—George Matheson.

Christ who registers the cup
Of mere cold water for his sake
To a disciple rendered up,
Disdains not his own thirst to slake
At the poorest love was ever offered.

—Browning.

When the soul is bowed in the inner sanctuary of the spiritual and the real, Jerusalem and Gerizim are from their very nature imperceptible.—Bernard Lucas.

Thou who art Light, shine on each soul!
Thou who art Truth, each mind control!

—John Hay.

We do not need Christ's visible presence to cope with the evils of our times any more than the father needed it for the cure of his boy.—Wm. M. Taylor.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.

—Tennyson.

The purification of the temple is the perpetual charter of reformation.—Lange.
Like Thorwaldsen, who gave as his birthplace the sea and also the city of Rome, where he began his artistic career, the Irish evangelist Summerville, when asked by Dr. Tyng where he was born, replied, "In Dublin and in Liverpool." "How can that be?" asked Dr. Tyng. "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" returned the evangelist.

"Master, where abidest thou?
We would leave the past behind,
We would scale the mountain's brow,
Learning more thy heavenly mind."

The written word come, to us like the incarnate Logos, wearing an Eastern, a Jewish, dress.—Henry Drummond.

The zeal for truth and righteousness and goodness anywhere, in politics, or in literature, or in education, does not seize hold of men with the vigor which may be described, in the Bible phrase, as a zeal that eats one up.—Samuel Valentine Cole.

"Happy is the husbandman who can see the fields whitening unto the harvest. Jesus saw humanity as a great harvest field, marvelous in its possibilities and glorious for its certainty of reward for the laborer."

He will not be regarded as a superfluity, the confectionery or the dessert upon the table. He will not be added as a mere condiment, to spice out matters of more importance. He is the very staff of life!—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. What man called Jesus the Lamb of God?
2. What two disciples were the first to follow Jesus?
3. What disciple was brought to Jesus by Andrew?
4. What did Jesus call the Temple at Jerusalem?
5. How did he show his reverence for his Father's house?
6. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus about God's loving the world?
7. What did Jesus tell the woman of Samaria about God?
8. What did he do for a nobleman? For a man at the pool of Bethesda?
9. What share did a boy have in feeding five thousand people?
10. What did Jesus say about himself as the Bread of Life?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Give the words in which John records the Incarnation. 2. How did John the Baptist show his nobleness? 3. Why is the first chapter of John sometimes called "the chapter of Eureka's"? 4. How did Jesus show righteous indignation? 5. Why would not the Jews have dealings with Samaritans? 6. What great truth did Jesus make known to a Pharisee? 7. What great truth did Jesus make known to a sinful woman? 8. Why did he work miracles? 9. Recall all the words and terms applied to Jesus in the Quarter's lessons. 10. For each lesson give a truth learned.

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE LESSONS

1. Locate Palestine. 2. What is its size? 3. What limits it on the north? East? South? West? 4. Describe the coast line. 5. Describe the four parallel regions. 6. Describe the Jordan River system. 7. Locate the chief mountains. 8. Name and locate the political divisions in the time of Christ. 9. Describe Jerusalem. 10. In what town did Jesus spend most of his life before his Public Ministry? Where is it? 11. What city did he make his headquarters during his Public Ministry? Locate it. 12. Where was Jesus when he offered himself as the Water of Life? 13. Where was he when he spoke of himself as the Bread of Life? 14. Where were the five thousand fed?

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1. What are the first three Gospels called? 2. Why is not John included among them? 3. In what respects is John different from the Synoptic Gospels? 4. What does it omit which they include? 5. What does it give which they omit? 6. What miracles are given in all four Gospels? 7. Who wrote the Gospel of John? 8. What reasons have we for believing this? 9. When was it written? 10. What can you tell about the writer? 11. What is the Prologue about? 12. Which chapter records Jesus' conversation with the woman of Samaria? 13. Which, his conversation with Nicodemus? 14. Where will you find his discourse about the Bread of Life? 15. About himself as the Savior? 16. What testimony to Jesus was borne by the Baptist? 17. By the nobleman? 18. By Jesus' miracles? 19. What antagonism was aroused by the miracle at the Pool of Bethesda? 20. What was the effect of Jesus' words about himself as the Bread of Life?

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Before class-time have the picture on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture should be covered with paper attached at the top so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls. Or, copy the pictures by tracing on thin paper and paste the copies on eleven cards; let the pupils write the stories beneath the pictures.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

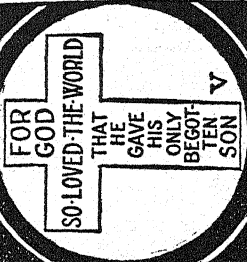
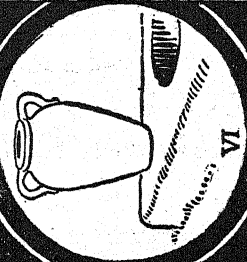

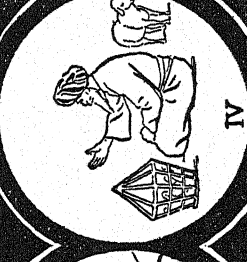
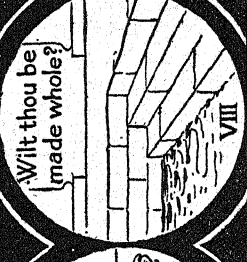
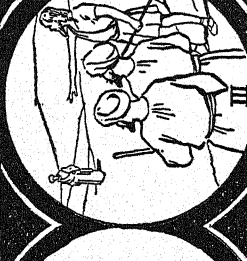



After picturing the scene of each lesson, let the pupil give the title and golden text and answer a few questions in regard to it.

I. I see an aged man writing. He has just finished these words, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and his face is bright with the glow of happy thoughts.

II. A strange looking man seems to be the chief figure in this picture. He wears a garment made from the skin of an animal, and he stands near a river, closely surrounded by a group of men.

III. This picture has several scenes. In the first one, this strangely clad man is standing with two other men, and pointing to a Man who is passing in the distance. In the second scene, the Man who was pointed out has turned around and is speaking with the two men who are following him. Now I see one of the two men hastening along with a third man. Here the Man pointed out is talking with yet another man. Finally there is a man coming out from under a tree with thick foliage and meeting this last man, and after talking awhile they, too, start off in haste.

IV. In this picture there is great excitement. A Man with flashing eyes is driving out from an enclosed place oxen and sheep, while other men are hurrying to get away from the place; some of them carry baskets and cages. Tables are overturned, and coins are scattered about.

 <p>FOR GOD SO-LOVED-THE-WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOT- TEN SON</p> <p>V</p>	 <p>VI</p>	 <p>VII</p>
 <p>IV</p>	<p>GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER</p> <p>I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me.</p> <p>John 14:6.</p>	 <p>VIII</p>
 <p>III</p>		 <p>IX</p>
 <p>II</p>		 <p>X</p>
 <p>THE WORD</p> <p>I</p>	<p>THE WAY THE TRUTH THE LIFE</p> <p>XII</p>	<p>THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD</p> <p>XI</p>

V. Here there is peace and quiet. Two men are earnestly talking in a room on the roof of a house from which an outside stairway leads to the street.

VI. A Man is seated by a well in the open field, talking with a woman who is holding a water-pot. Now the woman is gone, but her water-pot lies on the ground. The Man is still here, and is surrounded by a group of men.

VII. The Man, whom we have seen in all the pictures except the first one is here, and another man who looks like a soldier is holding out his hands to him as though he were begging him to do something for him. The scene changes, and I see a boy tossing about on a bed while the people in the room are weeping. The third scene is on the road. A man coming from one way is met by several men coming from the opposite direction, and they are talking excitedly and seem very happy.

VIII. There is a pool of water here, and there are many sick people lying near by under a covering which protects them from the sun. The Man whose face we now know so well is leaning over one of the men, who suddenly gets up and, stooping over, rolls up something which he carries away with him.

IX. I see a very great crowd of people sitting in groups on the grass, looking toward a Man who stands in an attitude of prayer. Several other men and a small boy stand near by.

X. Now we are inside a church (synagogue) where there is a great crowd of people to whom a Man is talking very earnestly.

XI. The Man is standing in a large open space before a temple. Around him is a crowd to whom he is earnestly talking. Some of the men seem excited and angry.

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verse which—

1. Speaks about finding a brother.
2. Begins: "And the Word became."
3. Tells who are true disciples.
4. Defines true freedom.
5. Calls a man a voice.
6. Is the first reference to Jesus as the Savior from sin.
7. Ends: "the Word was God."
8. Refers to a local prejudice.
9. Tells about the right of becoming something.
10. Tells for what one should work.
11. Gives Jesus' words about light and life.
12. Gives John's words about light and life.
13. Tells who are bondservants.
14. Gives an illustration of humility.
15. Contains a reference to a dove.
16. Defines faith as a work.
17. Speaks about hungering and thirsting.
18. Shows Jesus' reverence for the house of God.
19. Speaks of God's great love.
20. Begins: "If thou knewest."
21. Is a statement of infinite mercy.
22. Contains a reference to the wind.
23. Foretells Jesus' death.
24. Ends: "Springing up into eternal life."
25. Is a description of God.

Repeat:

Jn. 1.14. Jn. 1.18. Jn. 3.14. Jn. 3.16. Jn. 1.41. Jn. 4.24. Jn. 6.35.
Jn. 6.37. Jn. 8.12. Jn. 8.34.

Give the chapter and verse number of these words of Jesus:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him may have eternal life.

All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

A REVIEW CONTEST

Let two classes unite for this review, each with a leader. Let the teacher of Class A ask the questions, and the teacher of Class B keep the record. Class A is asked the first question and all who think they can answer hold up their hands. The leader of Class A decides who shall answer. The teacher who is judge then writes a credit or a debit mark for Class A. If the answer is wrong, the question is then given to Class B. The second question is given first to Class B, the third to Class A, and so on. Questions should all be such as can be answered in a word or two. Space does not permit a full set of questions here, but teachers can easily prepare in advance a sufficiently long list.

1. Who was called "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile"?
2. Who is known as "the man that came to Jesus by night"?
3. Who said that he was unworthy to unloose the latchet of Jesus' shoes?
4. Where was Jesus when asked to cure a boy, and where was the boy?
5. Who said, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world"?
6. Who were the first two disciples to follow Jesus?
7. Who brought Peter to Jesus?
8. What is the first miracle recorded in John?
9. Whom did Jesus "prove" at the feeding of the five thousand?
10. Who told Jesus about the lad's supply of food.

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. An analysis of the first eight chapters of John's Gospel.
2. A Life of John the Apostle.
3. A Life of John the Baptist.
4. The Testimony Borne to Jesus as the Messiah.
5. The Miracles of the Quarter, and the Spiritual Truths they Typify.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. From which commandment did the Jews get their belief that a man suffered from the sins of his parents? (Ex. 20.5.) 2. What connection did Job's friends think existed between suffering and sin? (Job. 4.7-9.) 3. Look up Jesus' words in Lk. 13.1-5, and tell their bearing upon verse 3. 4. What calamity did Jesus say took place in order that the Son of God might be glorified thereby? (John 11.1-4.) 5. What means did Jesus once use in curing a deaf and dumb man? (Mk. 7.33.) 6. In what other miracles of restoring sight did he merely touch the eyes? (Mt. 9.27-31; 20.29-34.) 7. The first time the man that had been blind was before the authorities, to what two things did he testify? 8. At the second hearing, upon what "irrelevant question" did the man refuse to express an opinion? 9. What words of the man show both boldness and a sense of humor? 10. What words show that he has lost patience with his critics? 11. How did he shrewdly show the illogicalness of the Pharisees' position? 12. What witness did the blind man bear to Jesus from his own experience? 13. What true inference did he draw from his cure? 14. What great conclusion did he reach?

Questions to Think About. 1. Could Jesus have healed the man without the use of the clay and the Pool of Siloam? 2. Why, then, did he use them? 3. Is all suffering caused by sin? 4. Does all sin cause suffering? 5. What does verse 3 mean? 6. What does verse 4 mean? 7. Through what stages in belief did the man pass? (Verses 11, 17, 33, 38.) 8. In how many ways did the man prove himself a good witness at the bar? 9. Should you be as grateful for your gift of sight as if it came to you miraculously? 10. Have you ever thanked God for all his good gifts which you take as a matter of course?

SECOND QUARTER

LESSON I—APRIL 1

JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND

Golden Text

I am the light of the world. John 9:5

LESSON John 9:1-38: verses 1-11, 35-38 printed MEMORIZE verses 3-5

1 And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, 7 and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing. 8 The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9 Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he. 10 They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened? 11 He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

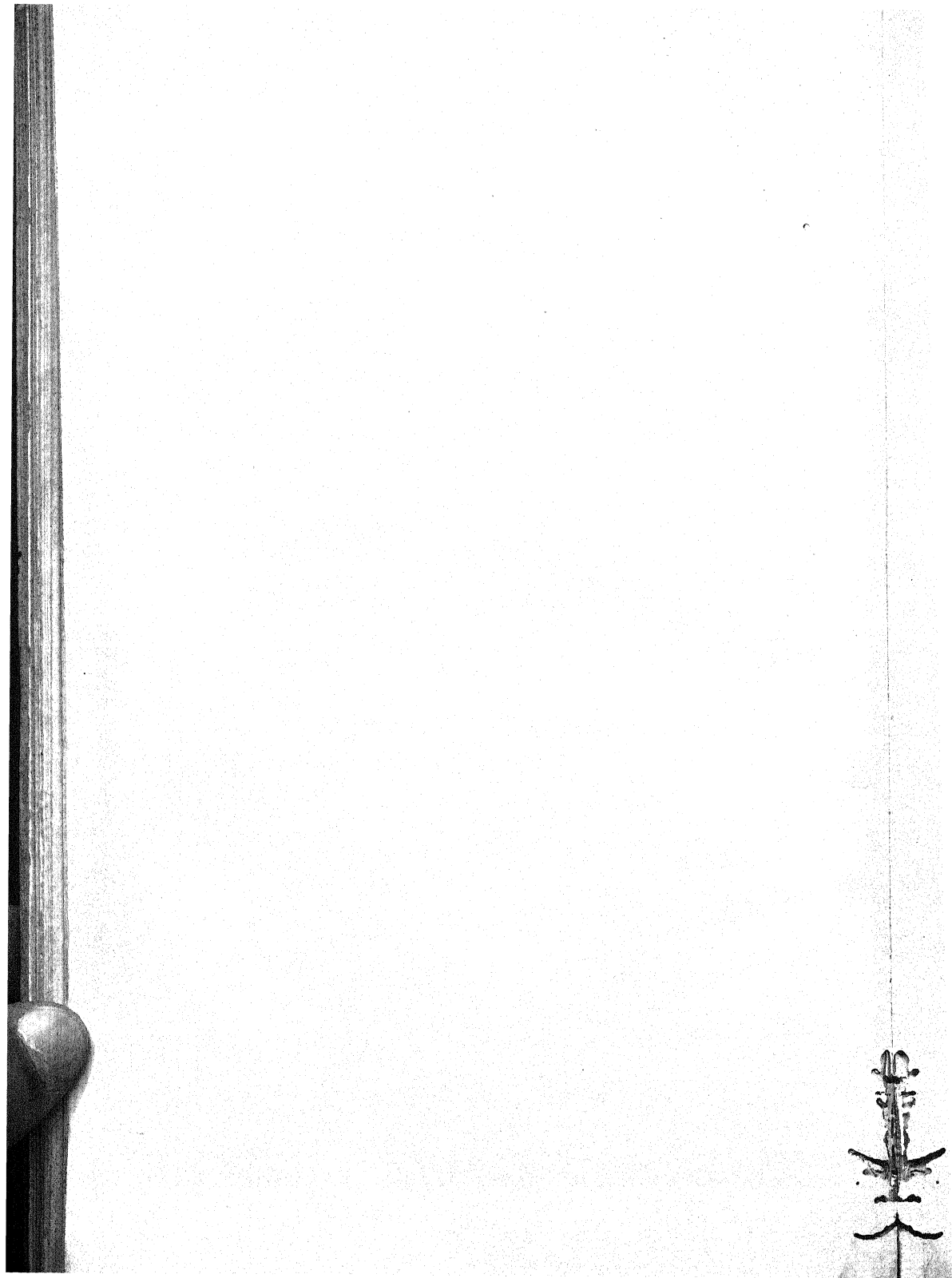
- I. The Disciples' Question about the Connection between Blindness and Sin, 1-5.
- II. Jesus Restores the Sight of the Blind Man, 6-7.
- III. The Effect of the Miracle upon the Jews, 8-12.
- IV. The Former Blind Man Cross-questioned by the Pharisees, 13-17.
- V. His Parents Questioned, 18-23.
- VI. The Man again Questioned and Excommunicated, 24-34.
- VII. Jesus Finds the Outcast and Reveals Himself, 35-38.

1. *As he passed by.* See the Historical Background.
2. *Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?* The Jews held that calamities were always the result of sin. Recall how insistently Job's friends tried to make him admit some sin which was the cause of his troubles. See p. 144.

3. *But, Supply, he was born blind.—That the works of God should be made manifest in him.* Jesus throws the responsibility for the man's blindness upon God. "Within the larger circle, namely, that evil is made to serve God's purpose at last, and that all things work together for good to them that love God, there is the lesser circle of Christ's activity, from which he felt that all merely accidental was excluded" (Reith). A thoughtful writer sums up these ways in which the blind man made manifest the works of God: the body teaches spiritual truths—a blind or a maimed man shows us distinctly that God made the world and takes responsibility for it: every disability



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
From a Painting by Holman Hunt
See the artist's words on page 4



is really a special opportunity for service: again, for some natures, suffering and blindness mean extra capacity—a blind Milton sees visions withheld from the light of happier days; further, to be blind is both to prove that God's will is greater than man's, and to show that he calls some to serve him by action and some by passiveness and submission: to all this, the blind man of our lesson added his opportunity of displaying God's power by submitting to the healing.

4. *We.* The disciples as well as Jesus.—*The works of him that sent me.* See Jn. 3.16, 17; 11.4.—*While it is day: the night cometh.* Day and night stand for *life* and *death*. Jesus saw an opportunity to make manifest the works of God, and was reminded of the shortness of time yet remaining in which he could fulfil his mission on earth.

5. *I am the light of the world.* The miracle he was about to perform on the eyes of the blind man was typical of his power to give spiritual sight.

6. Recall Jesus' method of procedure in restoring the hearing of the deaf men recorded in Mk. 7.33 and of the blind man in Mk. 8.23. Doubtless Jesus made use of these means in order to let the man feel his ministering touch, to arouse the man's faith through the use of means popularly supposed efficacious, and to test his obedience.

7. *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.* This command to wash his eyes tested the blind man's faith. Compare Naaman's test, 2 K. 5. 10.—*Which is by interpretation, Sent.* The Greek word *Siloam* is derived from a Hebrew root meaning "sent," and the Evangelist sees in the pool a type of Christ, the One sent by the Father. "The patient was, by the Sent One of God, sent to the well of the Sent One" (Lange).

9. *No, but he is like him.* His seeing eyes had naturally changed his appearance.

12-34. See the Historical Background.

35-38. *They had cast him out.* Out of the synagogues; they had excommunicated him. See *Light from Oriental Life*. For these last four verses see the Teacher-Training Thought.—*And he worshiped him.* "The outcast of the rulers casts in his lot with Jesus, and begins at once living the eternal quality of life which goes on endlessly. What a day for him from hopeless blindness of body and heart to eyesight that can see Jesus' face and know him as his Savior and Lord! Growth of faith is not limited by the counting of hours. It waits only on your walking out fully into all the light that comes, no matter where it may lead your steps" (S. D. Gordon).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *A man blind.* Blindness is far more common in Eastern countries than elsewhere. Dr. Geikie estimates that, while in northern Europe one out of a thousand is blind, in Egypt one out of every hundred is blind, and he attributes the blindness in Egypt to inflammation arising from the great changes in temperature between day and night. Perhaps there is no land where blindness is so common as in Palestine. Water is scarce in many districts and cleanliness is unknown. Dirt and flies increase eye trouble. In all parts of the land I saw flies allowed to settle undisturbed on the sore eyes of babies. Everywhere, too, I saw men with long scars on their cheeks, and inquiring the cause I was told that the ordinary remedy for a sore eye is a slash on the cheek; if one slash fails to prove effective, others are made, on the theory that inflammation set up in the cheek draws it away from the eye. Others resort to incantation. Professor Curtis found a shrine where the saint cured eye troubles. "A man with sore eyes takes a cock, cuts off its head, puts a drop of its blood in each eye, gives the cock to some poor person, and his eyes get well!"

2. *Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?* Were the disciples voicing here the popular theory in regard to reincarnation? A man born blind could have sinned only in a previous existence if his blindness was a punishment for sin. A writer in "The Expository Times" affirms that so universal is this belief in reincarnation in China today that even adherents of Christianity who have renounced this belief frequently use language which implies it.

Rev. H. P. Cochrane, a missionary among the Burmese, gives this incident. "One day, while my train was waiting at a station, a poor woman,

armless from her birth, came to the open window of my compartment, and stopped for alms. When she had passed out of hearing, I said to a heathen Burman standing by, "How pitiful!" Without any show of compassion he unknowingly repeated the old-time question—"Because of whose sin was she born in that condition?" That she was under a curse he had no doubt. No pity is wasted on a person who is born blind, deformed, or heir to loathsome disease. He is only getting what he deserves, in this life, and nothing can be hoped for but ages in one of the lowest hells hereafter.

6. *He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay.* Saliva was often used in incantations. Dr. Vincent quotes Pliny's words: "We are to believe that, by continually anointing each morning with fasting saliva (i.e., before eating), inflammations of the eyes are prevented," and also Persius' words: "A nurse takes the babe from the cradle, and with her middle finger moistens its forehead and lips with spittle to keep away the evil eye." Some Protestant scholars see in the Roman Catholic priest's touching with saliva the ears and nostrils of an infant at baptism a survival of this ancient custom.

35. *They had cast him out.* Dr. Edersheim shows that excommunication was a serious matter. A man was debarred religious privileges for thirty days; if he was still impenitent he was shut out for another thirty days; and then, if still obdurate, he was placed under the *Cherem*, or ban, and treated by others as if he were a leper.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In the lesson before our Review, what phrase did Jesus apply to himself? Where was he and to whom was he speaking? What effect had his words? What miracle has Jesus wrought at a pool, and what was the name of the pool? What other miracles have been recorded in our lessons? What was the effect of each? After Paul's shipwreck, how did the people of Melita show that they believed a special calamity to be the result of a special sin (a lesson of last year)? (Acts 28.1-6.)

The Date of Our Lesson. It was "as Jesus passed by" that he saw the blind man. This may have been as he was leaving the Temple, where he had been proclaiming himself the Light of the World and had talked about true freedom and spiritual sonship (Lesson XI, First Quarter). The Jews were so incensed over this discourse that they took up stones to cast at him, but Jesus made his escape. Probably, however, the giving of sight to the blind man occurred on another day. John records the fact that it was the Sabbath. In harmonies of the Gospels the events narrated in Lk. 9.51-10.42 are placed between John 8.59 and 9.1.

The Effect of the Miracle upon the Pharisees. Because the miracle was wrought on the Sabbath, some of the Pharisees said Jesus was a sinner, but others said, "How could a sinner do such a miracle?" The Pharisees asked the man what he thought of Jesus, and he answered, "He is a prophet." Then they claimed to doubt that the man had been blind and had recovered sight, and they called his parents. His parents feared the Pharisees, for the latter had threatened to excommunicate any one who should confess Jesus to be the Christ, so they merely said that they knew this was their son who had been born blind and now could see, but as to how he received his sight, he, who was of age, could tell them. Once more they examined the man. "Confess what we know, that Jesus is a sinner," they adjured him. "Whether he sins against your theological creeds I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," he stoutly maintained; they attempted to cross-examine him again, but his patience was exhausted and he sarcastically asked why they wished to hear his story over again—would they become Jesus' disciples? "We are Moses' disciples, we know that God spake unto Moses, we know not from whence this man is," the Pharisees said with scorn. "Why, here is a marvelous thing that ye know not whence he is!" retorted the man. "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." "Dost thou teach us?" they angrily exclaimed, and cast him out of the synagogue.

Jesus' comment was that he brought sight to those who, like this man, realized their need of him, and increased the blindness of those who, like the Pharisees, believed not in him, nor in their need of a Messiah.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

At the southeastern angle of Jerusalem three valleys meet: the *Valley of Hinnom* winds around the western side of the city; the *Tyropoean Valley* intersects the city itself; and the *Valley of the Kidron* extends between the city and the Mount of Olives on the east. Near where the valleys unite is the *Pool of Siloam*, known today as the "Birket Silwan." Through a subterranean channel water from the Fountain of the Virgin flows into this pool.

Assign paragraphs 120 to 123, "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Phillips Brooks traces in the last four verses of our printed text the progress of a simple, candid mind on its way to the conviction that Jesus is Christ, and finds that it throws light upon the ways in which others come to Christ. The blessing of sight had cost the man dear; he had been excommunicated, and yet he had stood by his benefactor. He found his wonderful friend and was eager to thank him. Then Jesus asked, not, "Are you glad and grateful?" but, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man was bewildered. He had thought to thank his friend, and lo! suddenly he was dealing with God and with the infinite relations between God and man. He found that he must meet the question: "Have you faith in a spiritual purpose behind, under, through and through all that you are doing? Do you believe in and are you inspired by a pure, clear faith in God's love and in man's destiny as all gathered and summed up in the redemption of the God-Man, Jesus Christ?" What was the man's answer? "I do not know," he seems to say, "I did not mean anything like that; I did not seem to believe, but yet I have evidently not exhausted or fathomed my own thought. There is something below that I have not realized. Perhaps I do believe. At any rate I should like to. The vague notion attracts me. I will believe if I can." And then Christ tells him, "Thou hast both seen him and he it is that speaketh with thee." And the man said, "Lord, I believe."

To open the eyes and find a Christ beside us,—not to go long journeys to discover a Christ with whom we have had nothing to do,—this is the Christian conversion. This is Christ's conversion of a soul.



The Pool of Siloam

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Should you go to Mexico you will visit its cathedrals, but no matter at what time of the day you approach the buildings you will have to pass a sorry-looking group of beggars. At times of special celebrations I have seen beggars lining the streets for some distance away. Some of them were lepers and had only stumps of hands which they held out in supplication; some were misshapen and crippled, very many were totally blind, and one and all they cried out as one came near, "For the love of God, give me a centavo." We know that in Palestine in the time of Christ such sufferers sat outside the Temple and the synagogue and begged for alms. One day Christ stopped in Jerusalem to speak with a beggar who had been blind from his birth.

For Older Pupils. When Jesus and his disciples came across the man that had been blind from his birth, what question did the disciples ask him? What did such a question imply as to the sin of the man? Either he had sinned in some previous incarnation, or, as some one has said, God punished him before his sin was actually committed, on the principle of the

school master who thrashes his pupils regularly because he concludes that if they do not deserve punishment today they certainly will tomorrow! What does such a question imply as to the connection between sin and suffering? Does sin always bring suffering? Is much of the suffering of this world due to sin? Is all suffering the result of sin? What does the book of Job have to say on this question?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Sin Does Bring Suffering. "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" In pointing out the absurdity of this question asked by the disciples, Dr. W. J. Dawson adds: "Yet there is one thing not to be overlooked: it is the ineradicable moral instinct which leads men to connect penalty with wrong-doing. Let men say what they will, all men have a certain instinct that the Power which rules the universe is just; that moral cause and effect run through all the world; that no wrong-doing on the part of the humblest, committed in the most absolute secrecy, or covered by what seems the most complete effacement of time, can or does escape punishment."

Not All Suffering is the Result of Sin. Sin does cause suffering, but the disciples' pitiless logic of no sin, no suffering, was quickly denied by the Master. "He refused to argue back from suffering to antecedent sin. He denied our right to grade sinners by the measure of their sufferings. Let no white soul ever go to ransacking its past for adequate key to its torment. Sickness is no more infallible testimony to personal or inherited sin than the blackness of a cat proves its birth on a dark morning."

Dr. A. L. Banks tells a German pastor's experience with a poor mother who had never heard Jesus' answer to the disciples' question. The rain caused this pastor to seek shelter in a near-by cottage, where he found a sad-faced mother and her blind babe. "The worst of it is," the heart-broken mother said to him between her sobs, "no doubt it is all my fault; such a misfortune could only befall a child on account of its parents, for the poor dear children are innocent enough. For the last four months I have been tormenting myself to discover by what sin I can have brought upon it such a calamity." The pastor read over the text and explained it, and the words brought joy to her heavy heart.

Why God Permits Suffering. Jesus' answer to the question of his disciples voices the principle that suffering is in God's plan for this world, that it offers opportunity for Divine power and for human effort. The need for beneficence is urgent, the time for working is short.

Affliction comes that the works of God should be made manifest. A striking comment on these words of Jesus I find in a story told in a juvenile paper. At the request of a patient a minister was present at an operation, and the surgeon said to him, "Who did sin, this woman or her parents, that this disease has come upon her?" "Neither did this woman sin nor her parents," returned the minister, "but that the works of God should be made manifest in what you are doing for her relief, and perhaps in other ways which we can not understand." Afterwards as the patient was recovering at the hospital, she said to her minister: "I have lived a good life, as the world counts goodness, but here in the hospital surrounded by the sick and unfortunate, I realize how little I have thought of others, and I have been asking myself how I can make this experience the means of good. Will you not join me in my prayer of thanksgiving to God for the years now added to my life, and pray that those added years may be filled with more unselfish thought for others?" When the minister told the surgeon his patient's words, the latter said: "The Lord's answer to my question is the right one. The works of God are manifest."

Our Part is to Alleviate Suffering. In the presence of the evils of the world, how many content themselves with asking curious questions! We want to know about the origin of sin, what it exactly is, how it is propagated, how it has worked, how the moral and physiological are related. We want to know about the origin of suffering, the distribution of it, the justice of it. The sad side of things is apt to become a matter of speculation and controversy.

How little did our Lord concern himself with the philosophy of the dark and sorrowful! He recognized the evil facts, and immediately dealt with them. He did not learnedly discuss the science of disease, he proceeded to cure it. He did not speculate on the antecedents of blindness, he opened blind eyes. He did not waste time inquiring into the origin of evil, he concentrated himself on its expulsion.

It is inevitable that we reflect and reason about dark problems, but let us be sure that we deal with them personally, practically, as Jesus did.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

II DOING THE WORKS OF GOD

My Father Worketh Hitherto, and I Work. In the profoundest reverence let us believe that the weariness of the Savior, while he was here upon earth, was again and again consoled and lightened by the work for the Father that he loved to do. Was not that what he meant when he said that his meat and drink was to do the will of him that sent him? When he was tired and sat by Jacob's well, was it a new fatigue or a great refreshment to open the fountain of the water of life to the poor woman? Why did he sweep aside the officious thoughtfulness of his disciples to get at the children who needed his blessing and the blind man who needed sight? Was it not that he wanted the joy of helping them? When his life was heavy, he lightened it with work. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—Phillips Brooks, in "Christ the Life and Light."

What is Your Work? It is a great thing to know what your task in life is, and those who are certain about it are to be congratulated. There are such people. One hears of a person now and then who has undoubtedly been called to the work to which he has put his hand; he is doing what God wants him to do, and doing it as well as he can; he has no misgivings about the matter; it is a trust committed to his charge and he will only lay it down when he receives the summons to come up higher. Anyone would say that of the late General Booth, or Florence Nightingale, or Father Damien, and many more of whom the world hears nothing, who have been content to forego ease, pleasure, and ambition in order to obey what they have felt to be a Divine command. It must be sweet for such as these when the night comes, to die with their task faithfully discharged.

But with the majority it is different. Are there very many who can confidently say that they know exactly what they have been sent into this world to do, and that they are doing it with all their might? I do not think so. Most of you have had your ups and downs of fortune, and many rapid and unforeseen changes of lot and position. Life may have been a hard struggle for you all through, but it has not been the same struggle all the time, nor have you been uniformly conscious of possessing a vocation. You just have to take what comes; there is no one task, as far as you know, that is just your task and nobody else's. How are you to work the works of God before the night closes down and puts an end to all your hopes and fears, your joys and sorrows? I will tell you. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." The work of God for you is one thing today perhaps, and another tomorrow. Never mind; it is the work of God just as truly as that of any inspired servant of the race. Jesus did not spend all his time healing blind men; he took that kind of duty in the day's work just as it came; where he was needed he labored. It was to bind up the broken-hearted, and proclaim deliverance to captives, to give rest to the weary and heavy laden as well as to fight a battle for us with the powers of darkness unsupported and alone. It was all his work, and he accepted it as God's will just as it presented itself to him hour by hour.—Condensed from a sermon by R. J. Campbell.

The Preciousness of the Time Remaining. Over the mantel in his Brattleboro home Rudyard Kipling had these words inscribed, "The night cometh when no man can work." On the side of his desk Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock pasted the reminder, "Do it now." "So much to do, so little done; good-by," were the last words of Cecil Rhodes, the great financier of Africa.

A missionary meeting was held in Tremont Temple, Boston, not long ago, and among the missionary delegates was one who forty years before had left the comforts of his New England home for the pioneer mission work in the far West, on the islands of the Pacific, and among the Indians of Alaska. His salary had never exceeded three hundred dollars a year, and a large share of that had gone to the people among whom he worked. As soon as the meeting was over he

started for the station to return to his beloved work. Friends had remonstrated with him in vain. "Surely after forty years of such a self-sacrificing life you will remain and give yourself a little rest and your friends the pleasure of seeing you," they said to him, but with a gentle smile he answered all: "I have not time. I am an old man, and there is so much to do. And I am so grateful that I have a little more life to give to the work which God has given me to do."

III THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD TODAY

What Do You Ask of the Light of the World? Theodore Monod, the celebrated French preacher, was once telling his young brother the story of Christ's giving sight to the blind. "What would you have asked from Jesus if you had been blind?" he asked the lad. "Oh," said the boy eagerly, "I should have asked him for a nice little dog, with a collar and a string to lead me about!" "Too often," as some one has observed, "we ask for the blind man's dog instead of the seeing man's eyes." "Be it unto you according to your faith."

O Love that Will not Let Me Go. The Rev. S. D. Gordon tells in a graphic way the story back of the beautiful poem by George Matheson, the famous blind preacher.

One day a young student was crossing the quadrangle of one of the old Scottish Universities toward his quarters in the dormitory. He was not feeling well. His eyes had troubled him and made his work very difficult. On the advice of a friend he sought the judgment of an expert in the treatment of the eyes. The specialist made a very thorough examination and then informed the young student tactfully but plainly that he would lose his eyesight, surely and not slowly.

Lose his eyesight? A sudden, terrific, actual blow between his eyes could not have stunned his body more than this stunned brain and heart. Lose his eyesight! All his plans and coveted ambitions seemed slipping from his grasp. With the loss of eyes would go the loss of university training, and so all of his dreams. Dazed, blinded, he groped his way rather than walked out of the physician's office.

His life was to be joined with another's. And now he turned his distracted steps towards her home, hungry doubtless for some word or touch of comfort for his sore heart. And he was thinking, too, that with this utter break-up of the future she must be told. And as he talked he said in quiet, manly words that under these circumstances, and the radical change in his prospects, she must be free to do as she thought best.

And she took her freedom! Yet she was a woman. And a woman's mission is to teach man love by the real thing of love, by being it herself, and drawing it out into full flower in him. That was the second staggering blow. A second time he groped his dazed way out of the house, down the street, into his lone student quarters.

But another One was near, brooding over him, and tenderly holding his breaking heart, and speaking words of warm comfort, and breathing in the freshening breath of true love. And as he yielded to this it overcame all else. A new mood came and dominated. And it became the fixed thing mastering all his life. Now he sat down, and out of his torn, bleeding, but newly touched heart wrote the words we have all learned to sing:

"O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee,
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

"O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray
That in thy sunshine's glow its day
May brighter, fairer be."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. If I pity a man who is blind and cannot see the beauty of nature, shall I not the more deeply pity the man who is blind and cannot see God?—Dr. R. F. Horton.

Verse 4. Death is the price we pay on earth's green sod
For God's free gift to live and work with God.

—J. S. Blackie.

Verse 4. Christ's work is not for the finger-tips; it is not a pastime: it is a warfare that demands the grit and grip of all our strength.—Samuel Chadwick.

Verse 5. Admit and then transmit the light of God in Christ.—Andrew Murray.

Verse 18. A prejudice can deflect the judgment, as subtle magnetic currents can deflect the needle: the film of an ecclesiastical prejudice can be so opaque as to make us "blind to facts."—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Verse 35. Our Lord is always seeking the outcasts; he never abandons the abandoned.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Verse 33. Opposition to our faith is often one of our best blessings: it brings out more clearly what the grounds of our faith are and reveals glories in the object of our faith which we had not seen before.—Robert E. Speer.

Verse 37. Though the eyes be sealed against sun and moon, he is not blind who sees Christ.—Christina Rossetti.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The weight of an infirmity is determined by our conception of it. If I look upon my ailment as the stroke of an offended God, I wear it like the chains of a slave. If I look upon it as the fire of the gracious Refiner, I can calmly await the beneficent issue.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Instead of seeking to fathom the reason why God permits sin and suffering in this world, let us seek to learn what God calls us to do in regard to them. "What does the sight of sorrow do for you?" questions Dr. Stephen W. Bull. "Does it start debate, or does it suggest your doing something! Get busy, men; do not drag; do not debate. The day is not long; presently the whistle will blow and you will put down your tools here to go into the tireless service yonder. You would not like God to see that you took it all out in talk down here, and you cannot go back to make good where you shirk. Let us serve with a smile—the shadows are lengthening."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The problem of sin and suffering. See the First Topic; the Book of Job; "The Biblical World," Jan.-March, 1915.

2. What is being done today for the blind. Recall Dr. Grenfell's statement: "I believe my faith not only made me see, but what is more, I do actually believe it has enabled me to help others to their vision, both physically and mentally." See "A Mechanical Eye," "The Outlook," Jan. 12, 1916, p. 61.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the entire chapter. 2. Where was Bethany? 3. What does John 19.40 tell us in regard to the time intervening between death and burial? 4. On what other occasion is it said that Jesus wept? (Lk. 19.41.) 5. What does Rom. 12.15 say about sympathy with others? 6. What effect did the raising of Lazarus have upon the Jews? 7. Upon Jesus' life? 8. What two others had Jesus raised from the dead? (Lk. 7.11-18; Mk. 5.22-24, 35-43.) 9. What was John's purpose in writing his Gospel? (*Guide*, p. 26.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the shortest verse in the Bible? 2. Why did Jesus weep? 3. To what special miracle do the Jews refer in verse 37? 4. What is the inference in their remark? (*Guide*, p. 149.) 5. Why did Jesus groan, verse 33? (*Guide*, p. 149.) 6. Why does Jesus in his prayer before the miracle was wrought, thank God for having heard him? (*Guide*, p. 149.) 7. In what words is the spiritual meaning of the miracle expressed? 8. Describe the character of Mary. 9. Describe the character of Martha. 10. How did Jesus regard death? 11. What is death? 12. Should any one who trusts Jesus fear to die?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize verses 21-27 of the next lesson. In your Note-Book write "XII. Jesus and the Blind Man."

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD (EASTER LESSON)

Golden Text

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life. John 11:25

LESSON John 11:17-44: verses 17-27, 43, 44 printed
MEMORIZE verses 25, 26

17 So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already. 18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off; 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. 20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house. 21 Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee. 23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day. 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; 26 and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world.

43. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. News of Lazarus' Sickness Sent to Jesus, 1-6.
- II. Conversation between Jesus and His Disciples, 7-16.
- III. Meeting of Jesus and Martha, 17-27.
- IV. Meeting of Jesus and Mary, 28-33.
- V. Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead, 35-44.

17. *The tomb.* Only people of wealth possessed tombs.—*Four days already.* In that hot country burial takes place on the day of death.

18. *About fifteen furlongs off.* Less than two miles.

19. *Many of the Jews had come to console them.* During the entire week following a death friends of the family come to make visits of condolence.

20. *Martha went and met him; but Mary sat still in the house.* Recall the characteristics of the sisters as shown in Lk. 10:38-42.

21. *If.* Words of bitter regret, such as most grief-stricken friends torment themselves with. Mary repeats the same words, verse 32; words probably often uttered by the sisters in the last four days.

22. *Even now.* What wonderful faith! She believed that Jesus could raise her brother to life.

24. All pious Jews at this time believed in the future resurrection. Martha seems to find little comfort in this far distant, future hope. Her words express belief, not faith: belief is a matter of the intellect; faith, a matter of the heart and life.

26. *Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.* Over the eternal life within the living who believe on me, death shall have no dominion.

27. *Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.* His power she will not limit.

28-31. Martha hurried back to Bethany and summoned Mary with the glad words, "The Teacher is here, and calleth thee." Mary was surrounded by friends, some of whom had come from Jerusalem, and when she suddenly left them they thought she was going to mourn at Lazarus' tomb, and they

followed to be with her. Mary met Jesus on the way where Martha had met him.

33. *He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.* The two Greek verbs express nearly the same thought, that of great agitation. Many interpretations of this emotion have been offered—sympathy with the sisters, indignation at sin, the thought of his own death which would be hastened by the miracle he was about to work, the thought of the misery of a world where death reigns. The margin of the RV suggests another interpretation: *He was moved with indignation in the Spirit and troubled himself.* Some of the Jews had come from Jerusalem (vv. 18, 19), and Jesus knew their hatred of himself, the Friend of the sisters, and knew that their wailing was hypocritical; therefore his emotion may well have been one of indignation.

35. *Jesus wept.* Very human was the Divine Savior. Although he had already foretold the restoration of Lazarus to life (verse 11), his heart was touched with sympathy for the sisters. Compare Luke 19.4.

37. Their inference is that since he did not prevent the death of his friend, he could not, and this failure is a proof that he did not open the eyes of the blind man.

38. *It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.* A tomb cut vertically into a rock would have the stone against it, but a pit would have a stone upon it.

39-40. When Martha shrank from having the decaying body exposed, she showed that she had not learned the lesson which Jesus had sought to teach her, and again Jesus told her that she was to see the glory of God manifested through the power of the Son.

41. *So they took away the stone.* "This is the pith of the whole story. Jesus' one effort is to get Martha up to the point of ordering that stone aside. Moving the stone was her confession of faith. Not that Jesus was the Son of God. That was settled long before. No: it meant this—that the Son of God was now actually going to *act as Son of God* to meet her need. Under his touch her dead brother was going to live. The Bethany faith doesn't believe that God can do what you need, merely. It believes that he will do it. And so the stone is taken away that he may do it. God has our active consent. Are we up on the Bethany level? Has God our active consent to do all he would? Is our faith being lived, acted out?" (S. D. Gordon.)

41-42. Because he would teach those standing by to see in the miracle he was about to perform a sign that he was sent of God, Jesus lifted his eyes and uttered a prayer of gratitude to God for hearing him. "Were you ever struck by a peculiarity in this prayer?" questions George Matheson. "Jesus thanks his Father for a boon which has not yet been given! He blesses God for a resurrection which has not yet been effected! Because he was so sure of his Father's mind that he thanked him in advance."

44. *Grave-clothes. Grave-bands, RVm.* See John 19.40—*Loose him, and let him go.* Here the story of the miracle ends, but the joy of the reunited family we can well imagine.

"Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed.
The lips of the Evangelist."

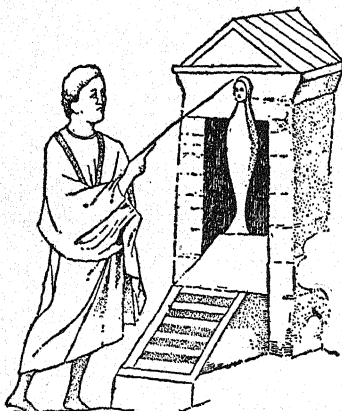
LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

43. *Lazarus, come forth.* The early Christians often pictured the raising of Lazarus. The mummy-like figure of Lazarus in the arched door of a tomb is familiar to every student of Christian art. Our picture, a reproduction from a drawing in the Roman Catacombs, is a crude but typical example.

43. *He cried with a loud voice.* Ishodad, Bishop of Merv, a Syriac commentator of the ninth century, observes: "He cried with a loud voice, not that the voice was useful to the dead man, but that the bystanders might know that the soul was far away from its body, and not inside the grave with it."

The Egyptians were accustomed to think of the *Ka*, the principal part of the soul, as haunting the tomb. This superstition was doubtless prevalent amongst all nations that had come under Egyptian influence. That it persisted into Christian times may be seen from a passage in a poetical sermon by

Narsai, a Syriac writer of the fifth century, who describes Joseph, on his way to Egypt as a slave, weeping at the tomb of Rachel and hearing her voice speaking to him. One can not be quite sure that this same superstition is



From a Representation in the Roman
Catacombs of the Resurrection
of Lazarus

dead yet. Is it not possible that Ishodad may be right, and that it was to guard against this natural but heathenish impulse of the human heart, that Jesus cried with a loud voice?—Margaret D. Gibson, in "The Expository Times."

44. *Bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.* Very soon after death a body was washed and anointed with honey and spices, and then wrapped in cloth and wound round and round with bandages.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What restoration of life through Peter did we study last year? What did Paul tell the Corinthians about Christ the first-fruits of the dead in another lesson of last year? What has Jesus declared himself to be in earlier lessons? What is the meaning of each metaphor?

John's Record Intervening between Last Week's Lesson and This. In order to give us a very fitting lesson for Easter, we transposed two lessons. The one which we shall study next week immediately follows in John's Gospel that of last week. Read the entire tenth chapter of John.

Christ's Crowning Miracle. With the fifth chapter of John we began our Evangelist's account of the growth of the Jews' unbelief in Jesus and of their bitter hatred which culminated in their determination to put him to death. In chapters 5-11 are recorded three miracles in Judea and one in Galilee; each gave rise to exciting discussions and fierce antagonisms, and each furnished Jesus an occasion for revealing the nature of his divine claims. We have seen how the healing of the infirm man at Bethesda led to the charge against Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, and to his assertion of his equality and authority with the Father; we have seen how the miracle of feeding the five thousand led to the discourse in which he proclaimed himself the Bread of Life; we have seen how the restoring of sight to the blind man led to his declaration of himself as the Light of the World; and in the raising of Lazarus we see that the miracle was the occasion of his declaring himself the Resurrection and the Life.

The raising of Lazarus has been called Christ's crowning miracle. It was deliberately planned for four days before it was accomplished. The events connected with no other miracle are so vividly told; no other miracle shows so fully Christ's tenderness and sympathy. It is the last before the miracle of his own resurrection, and with the exception of this greatest of all miracles, it is the climax of all the signs which were told to prove "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."

The Omission of this Miracle from the Synoptic Gospels. It is natural to wonder why there is no mention in the first three Gospels of the raising of Lazarus. No Gospel gives a complete account of Christ's activities. John does not record the raising of Jairus' daughter recorded by Mark, nor the raising of the Widow of Nain's son, recorded by Luke. Moreover, since neither Matthew nor Mark mention the Bethany family by name, and, though Luke mentions the names of the sisters (10.38), he does not tell where was their home, it has been plausibly suggested that the raising of Lazarus so aroused the hostility of the Jewish authorities that it was not expedient for the earlier Evangelists to write about them or the miracle while they were still living, lest they should suffer persecution. See Jn. 12.10, 11. John wrote much later than the others, and could therefore write more freely.

The First Sixteen Verses of John Eleven. "He whom thou lovest is sick," was the message which came to Jesus in Perea from Martha and Mary, the

sisters of Lazarus. They believed that Jesus would start at once for Bethany without being asked, but he told his disciples that Lazarus' illness was for the glory of God and of himself, and tarried where he was two days longer. Then he proposed going back to Judea, but his disciples remonstrated, reminding him of the danger of going where the Jews had so lately sought to stone him. He assured them that his life was safe as long as God had work for him to do, and added that he must go to awaken Lazarus out of sleep. His disciples took his words literally; if Lazarus was sleeping he would recover. Jesus told them plainly that Lazarus was dead, and that for the sake of their faith he was glad he himself had not been there. He invited them to go with him, and Thomas, despondent yet loyal and brave, said to the others, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jesus was in Perea east of the Jordan when word was brought him of Lazarus' death. *Bethany*, the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, is on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, less than two miles from Jerusalem. Its modern name is El-Azeriyeh, Arabic for "Place of Lazarus." The modern village consists of only a few dilapidated huts.

Assign paragraphs 92, 93 and 130-132 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The Gospel of John shows us Jesus as divine and yet as intensely human. How he loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus! How he sympathized with the sisters in their grief! He wept: he allowed all to see his emotion. There come times in the work of all teachers when tender, loving sympathy is of more avail than all knowledge or religious zeal. Do not let your sympathies become weakened. Let your scholars realize that in times of trouble or perplexity they may come to you, sure of your sympathy and encouragement.

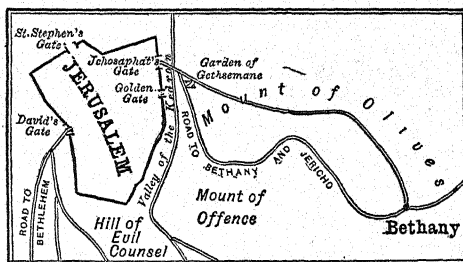
SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The lesson today necessarily covers the entire eleventh chapter of John, and the story is so rich in graphic touches, so powerful in its own human interest, so important in its bearing on the Life Everlasting, that there can be no better beginning of the lesson for younger pupils than the first part of the story itself.

For Older Pupils. The other evening, Mr. Dwight Elmendorf showed us some remarkable pictures. On the screen we saw buds develop into flowers, then wither and decay while other buds burst into bloom. In one of the pictures several hyacinths were opening at once. Was it a miracle? Flowers do not burst from buds before our eyes. We have to follow the little rusty, brown bulb's suggestion in Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock's poem—

"Plant me and see what I shall be—
God's fine surprise before your eyes."

Then Mr. Elmendorf explained how the pictures had been secured. Photographs taken at intervals of fifteen minutes over a period of three weeks had been shown rapidly as a moving picture in two or three minutes. We had the interpretation of the miracle and we were satisfied. But did we learn how plants grow, how from a seed a flower springs, and from a dead flower seeds come? We know the facts, but the how is beyond our ken. How a babe grows into a man, how the man dies and what his life is after death, we can not know. But the facts of life and of death we know, and the fact of life after death Jesus proclaims in the words most precious to every believing heart—I am the Resurrection and the Life.



Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives

"A body wearing out,
A crumbling house of clay!
O agony of doubt
And darkness and dismay!
Trust God and see what I shall be—
His best surprise before your eyes!"

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THAT "IF"

Faithless "ifs." "How often we are tempted to make use of this faithless "if." We say, "If sin had never come into the world, how different would life have been!" "If the Bible contained fewer difficulties, how many more would have accepted the Faith of Christ!" "If God had in some way revealed to the world beyond a doubt that Christ was God, how much more easily we should have triumphed!" "If our own lives had been different; if we had been better educated; if our fathers had not died at the age they did; if our prayer had been answered, and the wife or child or the mother had lived, how much more willing we should have been to accept him as our Savior!" But all these are faithless "ifs." We cannot expect that God's design for the development of character should have been altered for our particular convenience. It is necessary sometimes that we, like Martha and Mary, should suffer for the Kingdom of God.—From a Sermon by Melville Griffiths.

If Thou Hadst been Here, My Brother Had not Died. A correspondent recently sent the following letter to an English religious paper.

I have known heavy sorrow, and I say this as I look back—that it is just that "if" that brings all the bitterness into our sorrows.

I almost bade fair to lose my life, I certainly lost all joy in life, when I lost a dear little one—that "if" crushed the life out of me. "If I had not taken him out on a day when a March wind blew, *if* I had not left him to go to the Lord's house on the Lord's day, *if* I had done differently, *if* I had sent for a medical man sooner"—and so this *if* went on until my heart was broken. But the Lord has shown me that there was no "if" about it.

When the heaviest sorrow of my life came, and my husband died, the human side of it, was most disastrous. From the beginning a mysterious illness that was not understood, and when understood, even the medical men themselves tacitly acknowledged that everything that was wrong had been done, and nothing that was right—you can just see what that "if" would have been then; but I do thank the Lord that he showed me there was no "if" about it.

Last year, while in Glasgow, I went to hear that old servant of God, Andrew Bonar, and he said: "I have in the course of my ministry been into hundreds of homes where there was sorrow and bereavement, and I have always found it was that '*if*' that brought the sting. I have a dear old friend who has written a piece of poetry, which runs thus:

The chain of second causes, however long it be,
Has yet one link we call the first; 'tis held,
O God, by Thee.

God holds the first link in the chain, and we might as well have the comfort of it. There was no mistake on the part of Jesus that he did not go sooner to Martha and Mary, neither is there in his dealings with us.

The Silent Christ is Not the Passive Christ. But the Divine Friend has not forgotten, the Savior has not ceased to save, though he leaves us for awhile to bear the burden of trial and affliction unrelieved. He is no more really silent and passively indifferent today than he was on the day when Martha and Mary sent to tell him of their trouble and he let them wait before coming to their aid. He knew all about it, followed the whole course of events as though he were on the spot, as he really was in spirit; and he came when they were ready for the truth their sorrow had to teach. It was the truth that nothing really matters except to live in him, that earthly fellowship is but a shadow of that which is to come, and that this world, with its numberless griefs and disappointments, calamities and disasters, is not worth the interest we bestow upon it. We can carry heaven in the soul, and anticipate immortal joys by realizing that death is powerless to rob us of anything

that is ours in the spirit. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

"Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." He is here, wherever need is, wherever woe is, wherever the weary and the sorrow-laden cry for help and comfort. Above all, wherever love is giving itself in sacrifice there is he, the world's Redeemer, today, as in the days of old, drawing men unto himself. There is not less of Christ in the world today, but more, because of the terrors and exactions of war. It does not look like it, but so it is. This wild outburst of wicked passion from which we are suffering today is nothing new; it was all there already, waiting for its chance to spring out, and if it had not done so in one way it would in another. But along with this vomit of death has come a new outburst of life, a new birth of pity, tenderness, and heroic virtue. Wonderful things are happening, and where you see these you see Christ. We cry out to him amid the darkness and the pain, and here he is. Yea, blessed be God, in all the fulness of his saving power, his matchless love and compassion, here he is.—Condensed from a Sermon by R. J. Campbell.

II I AM THE RESURRECTION

The Glad Easter Day. We celebrate today that first glad Easter morn when he who is the Resurrection and the Life in his own Self brought life and immortality to light. The brightness that streamed from his empty tomb has gladdened all the ages since.

Does it seem a hard thing to grasp, the fact of Christ's resurrection? It is believable though not understandable. At this writing a wonderful miracle has just happened. A man at Arlington, Virginia, has spoken into the mouthpiece of an ordinary telephone and his words have been heard by a man listening on the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and by another man at Honolulu! The voice of the man in Virginia rode the electric waves over ocean and land, with no connecting wire; it is the latest triumph of wireless telephony. We do not understand the marvel, but we believe it. Martha and Mary and the rest who stood around Lazarus' tomb, and the weeping women and Peter and John at the tomb of Christ, would not have believed that one could speak from Bethany and be heard even two miles away at Jerusalem: this would have been to them as impossible as some today call the resurrection. They did not, nor can we, understand the marvel of resurrection, but they believed as we believe, that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and that Jesus himself arose from the dead.

"Martha: A Story of the First Easter." See "The Sunday School Times" for April 1, 1911.

Have We Lost the Assurance of Immortality? When Mr. Dan Crawford, the missionary from Africa, visited our country he found many practices here which to his mind compared most unfavorably with those in Africa. Speaking one day about immortality he said: "Right across Africa, away on the lonely edge of the marshes, there is no native who would ever think of denying the immortality of the soul. Never! They say, 'The dead do not really die!' They say, 'The body is the cottage of the soul.' And no African would say of anyone who is dead, 'Mr. Smith has departed.' They would say, 'He has arrived.' And when David Livingstone died away down on the shores of Lake Bangweolo they said, 'He sleepeth.' Always, 'He sleepeth.' And against that what do I find in your modern civilization? I find materialism rampant—so rampant that you have no such certainty as that."

Dr. George Clark Peck makes a similar arraignment. "The man on the street," he declares, "has lost nowadays the assurance of immortality. He is still interested in the theme; likes occasionally to hear about it; would be glad to know that the theme represents a fact. But he has lost what Bushnell called 'the power of an endless life.' Nearly all his estimates are made on the basis of three-score years and ten. What he has to do or enjoy or suffer must be encountered quickly. For, as the Preacher says, 'There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.' And if occasionally he forgets his most sacred vows, and, having forgotten, descends to the level of the brute, he hopes to be excused, since he will be 'so long time dead.' In short, modern Epicureanism, whether in forms which the founder of the school could approve, or in grosser orgies, is the perfectly logical, the inevitable result of loss of grip on the truth of immortality. Only

the setting of human work and love and fellowship in the light of the eternal years will help man to recover his lost ground."

III I AM THE LIFE

These Are Not Vague Words. Christ's words, "I am the life," may seem to us in our ambitious days to be the vaguest of all words. But the time comes when they speak to us of the most concrete and definite satisfaction. For life itself is the greatest dread of many. What to do with it, and how to keep it from becoming a burden and a distaste, is a serious question with them. There is often a mysterious sadness about people who have no particular sorrows. Life is a defeat, not because plans have miscarried, but simply because there has ceased to be any motive that makes it worth living.

The greatest gratitude we can feel toward Christ is when we feel that he has just given us back our life itself as something to rejoice in. As a great artist, walking about among the efforts of his pupils might come to one who had just failed completely of the right effect, and by a word or a few strokes transform those efforts into a victory, so Christ comes to lives that have failed in their purposes and missed life's meaning, and turns their defeat generously back into a victory. Hitherto Christ has been a helper, whose power they have sought only as help in certain undertakings of theirs. Now they are conscious that their failure has not been merely in this or that particular plan, but that they have failed in life.

Christ's greatest gift and friendliness is revealed to us when he just comes and gives life back to us. Again we may lay plans, and exert our powers, and feel that there is everything to live for. Other motives have their period and cease to move us. He can come in when they are exhausted, and set before us something that shall move the heart, and satisfy it, and enlist it. Because he lives we shall live also. Take him away and countless lives would instantly lose their object, while countless others who know little directly about him, and live by his reflection in others, would be mystified as they found that life was failing them, too. Our very desire for life is a dependent thing. A few collisions, disappointments, and losses, and without Christ it becomes a burdensome mystery. All about Jesus in his earthly ministry were people who had had a new motive imparted to them. It filled life for the rest of their days. And today, as then, he is coming to men and women who otherwise would be living out their days with ever-decreasing interest, and he fills their lives with a purpose which sustains them to the end.—From an Editorial in "The Sunday School Times."

Alive and Yet Half-Dead. In Selma Lagerlof's "Story of Goesta Berling," the priest falls lower and lower through drink. Finally he lies down on a snow-drift to die and is rescued by an old woman. For awhile she labors with him to drive all further thought of suicide from his mind, but to all her words he answers that he must die. Then she strikes the table with her fist and tells him what she thinks of him:

"So you want to die, that's what you want. That would not surprise me if you were alive. Do you think that you have to lie stiff and stark with a coffin lid nailed down over you, to be dead? You are dead now, Goesta Berling! You have a skull for a head, but it seems to me as if the worms were creeping out of the sockets of your eyes. Do you not feel your mouth full of dust? Do you not hear your bones rattle when you move? You have drowned yourself in brandy and you are dead!" And then she added, laughing softly to herself: "It is truer what I am saying than I myself thought. I really believe that most of the people in this world are dead or half-dead."

Walk in Newness of Life. There is a story in 2 Samuel 23 which has been a real evangel to me and to others who have reached middle life. It is the story of Shammah, one of David's worthies, who stands in the middle of his little garden of lentils. The marauding Philistines had ravaged the one half, and carried it off, for they came out, as you will see in the margin, "for foraging." But the other half was left, and he stood between what was lost, irretrievably lost, and what was left, and said, "They shall not have that!" And the Lord wrought a great victory. Brothers and sisters of the middle term of life, standing, it may be, looking over what has gone down with the stream of time, and will never come back, but with the other half, it may be, of the precious garden of opportunity left, shall we not stand on its edge and say, "By the grace

of God, the enemy shall not have that, but it shall be for my Master, and for him alone!"—From an Address at Keswick by Canon R. C. Joynt.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. When Lazarus was sick, the first one they thought of was his Friend—they knew they could count on him: are you one of the "First Aid" men—or the forlorn-hope man?—Dr. Griffin W. Bull.

Verses 4 and 40. When our sorrow seems greater than it need have been, and to be without meaning to us, let us wait until we see what he means by it and what he means to do for us through it.—Robert E. Speer.

Verse 35. If you would have the gift of sympathy, you must be content to pay the price; like him, you must suffer.—F. W. Robertson.

Verse 36. Christ's love for man is made intense and personal by his love for Martha and Mary and Lazarus.—Donald Sage Mackay.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Believest thou this? "My Lord and Master comes very closely home to me with his questions. He will not let me content myself with generalities; he goes into minute details. He is not satisfied with my *comprehension* of the truth; he asks, 'Believest thou this?' He will not let me shelter myself from his home-thrusts by adherence to the *Church's* creed; he wants to know my own creed—'Believest thou this?' and he will not be content with my believing mere *elementary* truth. He leads me up to the highest truth and asks, 'Believest thou this?'"

Lord, give us more of faith,

For, in our mortal sight,

Life and our little death

Shut out the hills of light.—Nancy Byrd Turner.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Difficulties connected with the story of the raising of Lazarus. See chapter XXII of W. J. Dawson's "Life of Christ."

2. Life and Immortality. See the Second Topic; "The Outlook" for April 11, 1914; Aug. 30, 1913. Read interpretatively to your class Brownings' "Karshish."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. To whom were these words spoken? (*Guide*, p. 158.) 2. Describe an oriental sheep fold. (*Guide*, p. 156.) 3. Describe the way in which an oriental shepherd leads his flock. (*Guide*, p. 157.) 4. Describe an oriental shepherd's care of his flock. (*Guide*, p. 157.) 5. What is said about the life of a shepherd in Gen. 31:39, 40; 37:33; 1 S. 17:34-36? 6. How did David risk his life for his flock? (1 S. 17:26-37.) 7. What did Jeremiah say about false shepherds? (Jer. 23:1.) 8. What does Paul say about Christ as the Door in Eph. 2:18? 9. What did Jesus once say about scribes and Pharisees shutting the kingdom of heaven? (Mt. 23:13.) 10. For what purpose does the thief come to the fold? 11. For what purpose did Christ come? 12. Whom does Paul say that God loves? (1 Cor. 8:3.) 13. What did Jesus once say about seeking the lost sheep? (Mt. 18:10-14.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What connection has this lesson with the one two weeks ago? 2. What is the subject of verses 1-6? Of 7-10? Of 11-15? Of 16-18? (*Guide*, p. 156.) 3. Whom did Jesus mean by "all that came before me"? (*Guide*, p. 156.) 4. What does "to go in and go out" mean? (*Guide*, p. 157.) 5. Who were the "other sheep," verse 16? 6. In what respects may Christ be likened to a door? 7. Since Christ is the Door, what must we do? 8. What great heroes of Israel had been shepherds? (Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David.) 9. In what respects may Christ be likened to a shepherd? 10. Since Christ is the Good Shepherd, what does he do for us? 11. What are the beautiful words in which Jesus declares the depths of the love between himself and his followers? 12. What is our Sunday-school doing for the "other sheep"?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Repeat the Shepherd Psalm. Memorize the entire lesson for next week.

In your Note-Book write "XIII Jesus and Lazarus".

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Golden Text

I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. John 10.11

LESSON John 10.1-18: verses 7-18 printed MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

7 Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. 12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them: 13 he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, 15 even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. 18 No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. A Shepherd and a Thief Contrasted, 1-6.
- II. Jesus as the Door of the Sheep, 7-10.
- III. Jesus as a Good Shepherd, 11-18.
 1. Contrasted with Hirelings, 11-13.
 2. He Knows His Sheep, 14-15.
 3. One Flock, One Shepherd, 16.
 4. He Freely Gives His Life for the Sheep, 17-18.

7. *Jesus therefore said unto them again.* See the first six verses and the "Historical Background."—*I am the door of the sheep.* Notice that Jesus does not call himself the door of the fold. He exists for the sake of the sheep, verse 9. We must remove from our minds any idea we have of sheep pastures or barns, for it is the oriental shepherd life which Jesus is picturing. There a fold is mainly a means of protection from robbers, for in Syria sheep stealing is said to be as much a profession as horse stealing in some other countries. The flocks are small, and several neighboring flocks are brought at night by their shepherds to the one fold. It is a stoutly walled enclosure. There may be an iron-studded door, but usually there is only the opening where some shepherd stands and blocks the way or moves aside to allow admission or egress, and is thus himself virtually the door. Here he stays with his dog all night. This shepherd is called the porter in verse 3, for it is his duty to admit the shepherds in the morning. Dr. George Adam Smith was talking with a shepherd in Palestine, and pointing to the hole in the wall of the sheepfold through which the sheep entered asked where was the door. "Oh!" replied the shepherd. "I am the door." The flocks are quickly separated in the morning, as each shepherd calls out his sheep by name.

8. *All that came before me.* The reference is not to true prophets like John the Baptist, who claimed only the authority "given him from heaven," but to those who wrongly claimed authority.—*Thieves and robbers.* Compare Jesus' characterizations of the Pharisees as "ravening wolves," "robbers," etc., in Mt. 7.15; 23.13; Lk. 11.39, 52; 20.46, 47.

9. Notice how much is said in these few words: through Christ men have safety and liberty and sustenance.—*By me if any man enter in.* If one believes in me as the way of salvation appointed by the Father, and lives according to that belief.—*Shall go in and out.* "To go out and come in" is an expression often met with in the Old Testament, and means to engage in daily activities, enjoy full freedom.—*Shall find pasture.* The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, he maketh me to lie down in green pastures, Ps. 23.1.

10. *The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy.* "Who is this thief? Well, we know well enough that sin is such a thief, that wherever sin is allowed to come into our lives it abridges those lives, draws in the walls of their expansion, cuts down and impoverishes their joys. And there are many things short of sin, less coarse and evil, which, nevertheless, draw in the boundaries of our lives, narrow and stifle them, and do the work of the thief who came to destroy" (Speer).—*I came that they may have life.* With this statement of the purpose of his coming, the figure of himself as the Door changes to that of himself as the Shepherd.

11. *I am the good shepherd.* Good does not mean here kind, but rather genuine, true, as is shown by the contrast with the *thief* and the *hireling*. Compare Ps. 23; 80; Isa. 40.11; Ezek. 34.23; 37.24;—*Layeth down his life for the sheep.* See "Light from Oriental Life."

16. *Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.* These words are inscribed on the stone in Westminster Abbey which marks the place where Livingstone is buried. The Jews were of *this fold*: Gentiles were the *other sheep*.—*They shall become one flock.* *One flock* is a far better translation than the *one fold* of the Authorized Version, for there is a great difference between one flock and one fold. We can become one flock with Christ as our Shepherd, while yet enclosed in many different folds, with varying rules and regulations.

18. *Power.* Or, *right*, RVm.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *The sheep follow him, for they know his voice.* In the morning each man went a little way beyond the ring of tents, and standing there uttered his special call. Instantly the whole mass of sheep and goats was in motion, and as the shepherds continued to call the several flocks separated themselves, each streaming out of the camp in the direction of their respective guides.

The shepherds often give names to their sheep. Their names are descriptive of some trait or characteristic of the animal, as Long-ears, White-nose, Speckled, and so forth. Not unfrequently the sheep know their names, and will answer to them when called. Every shepherd worthy of the name knows and recognizes his charges by their appearance. When he goes over them to ascertain if all are there, either at coming home at night or on going out in the morning, he can tell, without counting, whether one be missing or not. Should one or two be wanting, he knows exactly which they are, and can describe them accurately.—C. T. Wilson, in "Peasant Life in the Holy Land."

5. *A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him.* The shepherd depends upon the sheep to follow, and they in turn expect him never to leave them. They run after him if he appears to be escaping from them, and are terrified when he is out of sight, or when any stranger appears in his stead. He calls them from time to time to let them know that he is at hand. The sheep listen and continue grazing, but if any one else tries to produce the same peculiar cries and guttural sounds, they look around with a startled air, and begin to scatter.—Mackie's "Bible Manners and Customs."

11. *The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.* Here the connection between the shepherd and the sheep is simply one of pecuniary interest. Ask an English shepherd about his flock, he can tell you the number and the value; he knows the market in which each was purchased, and the remunerating price at which it can be disposed of. There is before him so much stock convertible into so much money.

Beneath the burning skies and the clear, starry nights of Palestine there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where at any moment sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain-torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save their lives by personal hazard. Sometimes for the sake of an armful of grass in the parched summer

days, he must climb precipices almost perpendicular, and stand on a narrow ledge of rock where the wild goat will scarcely venture. And thus there grows up between the man and the dumb creatures he protects a kind of friendship. You love those for whom you risk, and they love you.—F. W. Robertson.

The earliest known sculptured figure of Jesus represents him as The Good Shepherd, and dates from the third century. It is found in Asia Minor, and is now in the Museum at Constantinople. "It is of quaint design, and is battered, squat, unsymmetrical. Untrained hands formed it. The casual eye scarce would deign to rest upon such a monument, and yet how full of meaning, how precious this rude monolith!"



THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What metaphors has Jesus used in earlier lessons to describe himself and his mission? Who is the first one of another fold whom Jesus sought to bring with him, as John records his deeds? Who is the first one whom Jesus himself called to follow him, as recorded in an early lesson? What had Jesus done for the man born blind? How had the man given his testimony to Jesus before the Jewish rulers? What had the Jewish rulers then done to the man?

To Whom the Words of Our Lesson were Spoken.

The allegory of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is closely connected with the lesson which we studied two weeks ago about the giving of sight at Jerusalem to the man born blind. Jesus is still speaking to that former blind man, and to the Pharisees who had excommunicated him and had condemned Jesus as a sinner for working the miracle on the Sabbath. Jesus first pictures a sheepfold into which a thief and a robber seek entrance by climbing up over the wall that encloses it, while the shepherd enters by the right way, through the door which the porter opens for him. His sheep know his voice and come at his call. He goes before them and they follow, while from a stranger they flee, because they know not his voice.

The Pharisees in their pride can not see that Jesus is describing them under the picture of the thieves and robbers, nor does the former blind man grasp the comforting thought that these Pharisees are false shepherds who do not themselves know the way into the fold; they thought that by excommunicating him they had closed the door into heaven for him, but they had no such power; Jesus is the true Door, through whom the man may enter God's Kingdom. Jesus, therefore, explains the picture he has drawn.

The Symbolism of Our Lesson. The beautiful pastoral symbolism of our Lord's discourse runs through the first eighteen verses of this 10th chapter of John. It has been pointed out, however, that in these words we have not one parable but three, all of them drawn from Eastern pastoral life, each related to the others as part of a composite whole, yet each presenting a distinct contribution of thought.

These three parables are drawn from the circumstances attending three different hours of the pastoral day. The first parable is that of the *Shepherd*, and comprises the first six verses. The scene is laid in the early morning. During the night the sheep have been sheltered in a large open enclosure, in which, under the care of a single porter, numbers of flocks belonging to different owners have shared a common protection.

The second parable, which is that of the *Door*, runs from the seventh to the tenth verse, and carries forward our thought from daybreak to midday, and from the large night-fold to a structure set in the middle of the pasture. This fold is meant to afford shade and security amid the day's heat and danger. The sheep may go in and out at will, according as they want food or rest. It was of this structure, with its wide swinging door, that Christ was thinking, when he called himself the Door. That door was at once a protection and a means of freedom.

The third parable shifts the scene still farther forward and brings us to the close of the day. The shadows are creeping up the mountain slopes. The chills of sundown are in the air. The flocks must be led back to the night-fold. But on the way a sudden danger emerges. Wolves spring out of ambush and attack the sheep. It is a critical moment, and tests the quality of the shepherd. The hireling runs away. The *Good Shepherd* casts himself between the sheep and the wolves, and sacrifices himself to save the flock.—Charles A. Berry.

The Effect of the Discourse. As usual after Jesus' words, the people who heard him were divided in their opinion regarding him. Some said he was possessed by a demon; others said his were not the words of one so possessed, and a demon could not open the eyes of the blind.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Of course you have noticed how frequently Jesus based his great lessons upon something which had just happened: in the present lesson, his beautiful truth about himself as the Door and the Good Shepherd has for its background his restoring of sight to the blind man and the Pharisees' shutting the door of the temple in the face of that man. Current events of importance to many, or local happenings of immediate interest to their church or school or class, alert teachers will use wherever possible. If you have not been in the habit of using these in class, you will be surprised to see how often you can illustrate your thought by their means, and what force they add to your teaching.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Have you ever heard our minister called the Pastor of this church? The word *pastor* comes from a Latin word meaning to pasture, to feed, and a pastor is one who feeds his people with spiritual food. A pastor is a shepherd, and his people are his flock. Who can repeat the first verse of the twenty-third Psalm? "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." What does Jesus call himself in our lesson today? What has he been called in the last quarter's lessons? The Lamb of God, the King of Israel, the Water of Life, the Bread of Life, the Light of the World. Does it seem fitting that Jesus should be called the King of Israel or the Light of the World, but rather strange that he should be called a Shepherd or a Door? As we study the lesson we shall see that these terms as applied to Jesus are beautiful and full of meaning for us.

For Older Pupils. In the Synoptic Gospels about thirty parables are given, "earthly stories with heavenly meanings," fictitious stories true to life told for the sake of the spiritual lessons they convey. John omits all these parables which form so large a part of Christ's teaching as related by the Synoptists, but gives two so-called parables not given in the other Gospels. These are not stories, and are in reality only extended similes; one is that of the Good Shepherd, our lesson today, and the other is that of the True Vine, our lesson a month hence.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I AM THE DOOR

The Way to God. We stop for a few moments at the bronze doors of the Baptistery in Florence to admire their art; then we pass through the door and go in. A door is not merely to be admired; it is an entrance way. Christ is the Door by which we enter into God; he is the Door by which God enters into us. "No man," he says, "cometh unto the Father but by me." This is not because God has shut up all other doors of entrance to him, allowing us but one. It is because the Infinite can manifest himself to the finite only in one way—by becoming, as it were, finite. He can manifest himself to humanity only in one way, namely, in the terms of a human experience.—Lyman Abbott, in "The Great Companion."

The Only Entrance. A certain man, wont to trust to his own merit for salvation, dreamed one night that he was occupied with the task of constructing a ladder which would reach from earth to heaven. Whenever the dreamer did a good deed the ladder went up a bit higher, and when occasionally an extra good act was performed, the progress toward the skies was

correspondingly accelerated. So in the course of the years the ladder passed out of sight from earth, clear up into the clouds. But when at last the confident builder was about to step off the topmost round onto the floor of heaven, a voice cried, "He that climbeth up some other way is a thief and a robber!" Down came the ladder with a crash. The startled dreamer awoke. He had learned his lesson. He saw that he must get salvation from Jesus Christ, for his own self-righteousness, inadequate to fulfil the whole law of God, availed not. There is only one way of sure entrance into the fold of God, and that is by the atoning merit of him who said of himself, "I am the Door!"—"Zion's Herald."

One only Door leads up to God;
'Tis Christ his Son;
Faith is the key that swings it broad;
And everyone
Who takes this key may upward plod.—Donald A. Fraser.

A Lesson from the Bird. One day I was in the new church building and I spied a bird flitting to and fro up among the timbers of the staging, evidently much frightened. I was sorry for the poor thing, for there was the open door all the while. If I had only known bird language I would have told it. The next day I went into the church again. The first thing I did was to look for the bird; and there it was, poor, tired thing, flying back and forth again and beating itself against the walls and the windows.

Well, it escaped after a while. How, do you think? It became tired and fell fluttering down, lower and lower—and there was the door. And then it just went out. Oh, it was so easy and so simple. The door had been there all the time. The door was put there on purpose for birds and folk to go in and out at. But it didn't know how easy the way was.

People sometimes are troubled on account of their sins—troubled to know the way out, and troubled about themselves. They think if they only work hard enough and try long enough they will get out of their troubles; and they flit and fly and flutter, and dash hither and thither, trying all sorts of things, but they don't get out. And Jesus is saying all the while, "I am the door." Sometimes the only way that some of us find the door is that we get so tired we cannot beat the air with our wings another moment, and with despair we fly lower, or fall; and then we find the door.

Do you know, children, that many people in other lands than this have felt that the only way to get their sins forgiven was to cut themselves with knives, or to hang suspended from a pole with an iron hook in their back, or to take long pilgrimages upon their knees? They must work so hard, and so long, and do so many things before their sins could be forgiven. They are like that poor, tired bird beating itself against the wall, and right before them is the open door, Jesus Christ. That is the simple way for us all, just to give ourselves to Christ. He will take care of our sins, and take care of our despair, and take care of us. Jesus said, "I am the door."—Frank T. Bayley, in "Little Ten-minutes."

Our Prayer. Spirit of Jesus, help me to enter by this Door, by this new and living way, into the life of the child of God. Let me accept the eternal life as my Father's gift to me through Jesus Christ. Let me know its power and pleasures more and more abundantly. Help me today and every day to think of my life as belonging to Jesus, and to use it as he would have me—for his glory and the good of those about me. Hear me for his sake, to whom I belong, whose service is perfect freedom.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

II I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

An Appealing Metaphor. There is a bridge in Austria which is adorned with statues representing Christ in different aspects of his earthly life: one shows him as a Carpenter, another as a Physician, a third as a King, a fourth as a Shepherd. The peasants offer their prayers before these statues, the artisan choosing the Carpenter, the farmer the Sower, each one the character that represents the help he most needs. Christ as the Shepherd appeals to every one, for this figure typifies alike the tender care, the wise guidance, the personal love, the rightful authority, and the self-sacrifice of our Savior.

No image has been so lasting in the Christian Church as this of Christ the

Good Shepherd, from the time when it was first drawn in rude outline on the roof of the catacombs at Rome. Christ is there represented with a lamb on his shoulders, with sheep about him in various attitudes, some apparently listening to his voice, others turning away from him.

In the writings of Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and other early Church Fathers, Christ is often called the Good Shepherd. The image has been found on the tombs of the rich and of the poor. "The popular religion of the first Christians," says Dean Stanley, "was the religion of the Good Shepherd. The kindness, the courage, the grace, the love, the beauty, of the Good Shepherd were to them, if we may so say, Prayer Book and Articles, Creed and Canon, all in one. They looked on that figure, and it conveyed to them all they wanted."

The Good Shepherd Knows His Sheep. Dr. Forsyth has told how a friend of his was on a sheep farm in Australia, when the owner took a little lamb from a pen and placed it in a huge enclosure with several thousand sheep, where the noise of the bleating of the sheep and the shouting of the sheep-shearers was deafening. The lamb uttered its feeble cry, and the mother sheep at the other end of the enclosure heard it, and started to find it. "Do not imagine that you are beyond the reach of the Good Shepherd," said the preacher. "He sees you, he hears you, every good desire of yours is known to him, and every secret longing for better things. He sees you as if there were no other child in the whole world."

It is sometimes hard to believe this. We think of ourselves as lost in an innumerable multitude, and fear that our feeble cry will not be heard. Said Cecil Rhodes of South Africa: "I feel that there is a strange egotism in supposing the great God should concern himself about a creature as small as myself." His thought is a most common one, but Christ's whole life and teaching prove its falseness. Jesus Christ was "the discoverer of the individual." He has a close, personal interest in each one of his followers. "I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father."

The Good Shepherd Lays down His Life for the Sheep. "Try to feel," some one has suggested, "by imagining what the lonely Syrian shepherd must feel towards the helpless things which are the companions of his daily life, for whose safety he stands in jeopardy every hour, and whose value is measured to him, not by price, but by his own jeopardy, and then you have reached some notion of the love which Jesus meant to represent; that Eternal tenderness which bends over us, and knows the name of each with a separate solicitude, and gave itself for each with a sacrifice as special, and a love as personal, as if in the whole world's wildness there were none other but that one."

Four times in these few verses we read that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. It is as if he wished to impress upon our minds indelibly the thought of what he has done for us.

He Leadeth Them Out. In the words of the third verse of our chapter, "He leadeth them out," our faces are turned toward the future and the wider world. In Old Testament imagery nothing is more suggestive than the frequency with which the pastoral and the military ideas are combined, as in that splendid picture of God leading the hosts of Israel "out of Egypt like a flock." So it ever must be. Faith, indeed, offers a safe fold to believers, but its shelter and quiet are not meant to last. In spite of the desire which has expressed itself in Roman Catholic monasticism, and in individual reactions in Protestantism toward the secluded life, the call is inexorable. Life in this world is not meant to be a sheepfold for the faithful, it is an affair of sterner meaning, with action in it and adventure.

This leads us into the public life of our times, with a call to understand and take a part in its movements. We must go out as thinkers, with fearless exploration of new fields of truth; as workers, to take up the unfinished tasks of the world; as soldiers to fight the long-standing evils, and to help the weak causes of the times; as searchers who shall seek until they find the lost. The practical meaning of this brings us at once to the thought of our national life and work. We find ourselves heirs to large responsibilities which we dare not and can not surrender. It is these responsibilities which force upon us the question, Who leadeth us out? Shall it be mammon, or the mere instinct of wandering and adventure, or the dream of glory, or Jesus Christ?

Our foreign mission enterprise is one way in which we have sought to meet these responsibilities. Let us link on the missionary with the imperial idea, for foreign missions are but the baptism of imperialism with the Holy Spirit. Their enterprise carries out in modern times the great dreams of old—Augustine's "City of God," Dante's "De Monarchia," More's "Utopia," Bacon's "New Atlantis." These dreams shall be filled when the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. In this light all narrower and poorer elements fall away from the missionary idea. It is a great department of statemanship, whose end is the conquest of the world for the empire of Christ. Surely our Christian life today is to be regarded, not as a sheepfold, but as a crusade.—Condensed from "Ephamera Eternitatis," by Dr. John Kelman.

III THEY SHALL BECOME ONE FLOCK

Other Sheep in China. A missionary of the "China Inland Mission" gives this experience which makes its special appeal to us.

Some time ago I was transferred to a station ten days' journey from Kweiyang-fu and before leaving went out for a short evangelistic tour in the country with two Christian workers. At one place several women of seventy or eighty years gathered around me and listened very attentively. I told the Gospel story as briefly and simply as possible, while they were getting dinner for my companions and me. We also taught them a very short prayer. I think they understood what we wanted them to grasp. I saw tears in some eyes as one and another said, "Why! I'm so old now, having little memory left, and I never heard this strange story before, but it is *very* good to listen to."

All too soon I saw by the slanting rays of the sun that it was time for us to be going homeward, if we did not wish to lose our way among the lonely hills, as I once had. With great difficulty did I unloose their hands from holding me by the loose sleeve of my coat, and as they saw that I must go, one and another of them said: "You'll come back soon, won't you? We do so want to hear more of these good words."

My life and service were now to be in a distant part of the province, and it was most unlikely that I should again visit the villages around Kweiyang, so, very sadly, I had to reply, "No, I do not expect that I shall ever come back."

"But surely you'll send someone else, won't you?" was their next eager question. To this also I was compelled to answer, "No, I can't do that, because there's no one else to send." We were obliged to hurry, so we began running along the footpath between the rice fields. As we did so, the cry came after us, and it has been ringing in my ears very often since that night: "Can I be saved with hearing only once? Oh, tell me, can I be saved with hearing only once?"

The Shepherd Spirit. The Good Shepherd, as Peter in his Letter suggests, is one who leaves us "an example that we should follow in his steps." I have read of an old Scot who lived in a wretched cottage out on the moors, and earned just enough to keep body and soul together by breaking stones. His wife and children had died, and he had become entirely blind. Yet he was always cheerful, for he found his happiness in gathering together the wild shepherd-boys from the moors, and telling them of the Good Shepherd and of the sheep that was lost and found. A minister came that way once, and tried to offer consolation for his hard lot. "You will soon be in heaven," he told him, "and then your troubles will be over." "In heaven, sir!" exclaimed the old man: "why I've been there these ten years."

Our Responsibility for Others Outside the Fold.

Needs must there be one way, our chief
Best way of worship; let me strive
To find it, and when found, contrive
My fellows also take their share!
This constitutes my earthly care;
God's is above it and distinct.
For I, a man, with men am linked
And not a brute with brutes; no gain
That I experience, must remain
Unshared.

—Browning, in "Christmas Eve."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. This is the blessed life—not anxious to see far in front; not careful about the next step; not eager to choose the path; not weighted with the heavy responsibilities of the future; but quietly following behind the Shepherd, one step at a time.—F. B. Meyer.

Verse 4. No disciple is a real disciple till he becomes a follower, going after the shepherd as one that follows by name and is drawn by love.—Horace Bushnell.

Verse 10. Jesus is not the door into a little life; he leads us into the largest, fullest life.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Verse 15. Death was not the wolf which the Good Shepherd saved us from; it was death with the sting of sin in it.—Dr. Marcus Dods.

Verse 16. Mankind is one in origin, one in the love that governs it, and one in the goal it is destined to attain.—Joseph Mazzini.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Christ is the Door; the only way through which you can enter the Kingdom of God is through fellowship with him. The Door stands invitingly open; the opportunity is now yours to enter.

"I am the Door, O waiting heart,
I am the Door this day, this hour;
Enter and learn how dear thou art
To him who saved thee by his power."

As helpless as sheep would we be without the guiding and safeguarding of the Good Shepherd.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Leadership of Christ. See the Second Topic, "The Great Leader," "The Outlook," May 6, 1911.
2. Livingstone's word: the spirit of missions is the spirit of the Master. See the Third Topic.
3. Many folds but only one flock. Various denominations needed, but one thing only essential. See "The Atlantic Monthly," May, 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What happened at the Feast of Dedication, immediately after our last lesson? 2. What effect had the raising of Lazarus upon the common people and upon the rulers at Jerusalem? (Jn. 11.45-53.) 3. When the last Passover in Jesus' life came, what did the people wonder? 4. What did the Jewish rulers do? (Jn. 11.57.) 5. What was the Feast of Passover? 6. What day was "six days before the Passover"? (*Guide*, p. 166.) 7. Describe the scene at the Supper. (*Guide*, p. 165.) 8. Who was the host at this supper, according to Matthew? 9. What reason for Mary's deed does Tennyson give in "In Memoriam"? 10. What was the value in our money of three hundred shillings? (Margin of RV.) 11. How do orientals use perfumes? (*Guide*, p. 165.) 12. What prediction did Jesus make in regard to the fame of Mary's deed? (Mt. 26.13.) 13. How is this supper kept in oriental churches today? (*Guide*, p. 165.) 14. What are some of the peculiarities of John's Gospel? (*Guide*, p. 27.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of Jesus' words in verse 7? (*Guide*, p. 165.) 2. Do you think that Mary knew she was anointing Jesus for his burial? 3. What do his words about the poor mean? (*Guide*, p. 165.) 4. Should the money spent in building a magnificent cathedral have been given to the poor? 5. What does our Golden Text mean? (*Guide*, p. 170.) 6. Why was there no waste in Mary's deed? 7. What do you think of Judas' argument? 8. What are some things that are priceless and yet can not be given a money valuation? 9. Do we show our regard for others as often as we should? 10. How can we today show our love for Jesus?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Tennyson's words about Mary's deed in "In Memoriam." Or Sill's stanza, p. 169.

In your Note-Book write "XIV Jesus the Good Shepherd."

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

Golden Text

She hath done what she could. Mark 14.8

LESSON John 12.1-11 MEMORIZE verses 2, 3

1 Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead. 2 So they made him a supper there: and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. 4. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, saith, 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor? 6 Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein. 7 Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. 8 For the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always.

9 The common people therefore of the Jews learned that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11 because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Jesus Anointed at Bethany, 1-8.
 1. The Supper in Jesus' Honor, 1, 2.
 2. The Anointing by Mary, 3.
 3. The Criticism of Judas, 4-6.
 4. The Commendation of Jesus, 7-8.
- II. The Effect on the People and on the Chief Priests of the Raising of Lazarus, 9-11.

1. *Jesus therefore . . . came to Bethany.* On his way to Jerusalem from Ephraim, 11.54.—*Six days before the passover.* See the Historical Background. The Passover commemorated the sprinkling of blood and the deliverance from Egypt. It lasted seven days.

2. *So they made him a supper there.* Simon the leper was the host, Mt. 26.—*But Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him.* Recall Tennyson's words about Mary:

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

3. *A pound.* Twelve ounces.—*Pure nard.* Or, *liquid nard*, RVm. The meaning of the Greek word, *nard*, translated *pure*, is disputed. Some scholars think that it means *liquid*, while others refer it to the name of the district whence the nard came. Perhaps Mary had purchased this ointment for the embalmment of her brother. Read Tennyson's words in "In Memoriam."—*Anointed the feet of Jesus.* His head also, Mt. 26.7.

4. *That should betray him.* Or, *deliver him up*, RVm. See Mt. 26.8; Jn. 6.71.

5. *Shillings.* The word in the Greek denotes a coin worth about eight pence halfpenny, or nearly seventeen cents, RVm. The shilling was a day's wage: three hundred shillings would equal a year's wages. "Already the lightning calculator had reduced the delicate deed to dollars. He even had a money value set on the Master—and cashed him!" (Bull).

6. *This he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief.* Judas' words about the poor were hypocritical: recall the Malagasy native's definition of hypocrisy as "putting a clean mat over a dirty floor!"—*Having the bag.* Or, *box,* RVm. The apostles had a common purse, of which Judas was the custodian.—*Took away.* Or, *carried what was put therein.* The Greek verb *ἐβάρατε* is in the imperfect tense, and denotes a customary act; it may mean either "was wont to carry," or "was wont to take away, purloin."

7. *Suffer her to keep it.* Or, *Let her alone:* it was *that she might keep it,* RVm. Compare Mt. 26.12; Mk. 14.8. "'Keep it' is the striking phrase. What does it mean? We speak of *keeping* a day, as Christmas, meaning to hallow the memory for which it stands. 'Keep it' here seems to mean that. Let her keep a memorial. Yet it would be a memorial *in advance* of the event remembered and hallowed" (Gordon).—*Against the day of my burying.* This may mean that Mary had anointed him for his coming burial, or that she had not used all the contents of the flask at the time of the objection by Judas, and should be allowed to finish what she had begun. Whether Mary's love made her more in sympathy with Jesus than were the disciples and she had understood his words as they had not, or whether Jesus gave her loving deed a greater significance than she had intended, cannot be known. "Acted faith affects the spirit's vision" (Gordon). "In Christ's words of commendation is the charter of all undertakings which propose in the name of Christ to feed the mind, to stir the imagination, to quicken the emotions, to make life less meager, less animal, less dull" (Peabody).

8. *For the poor ye have always with you.* "The poor shall never cease out of the land," Dt. 15.11. Jesus is here merely stating a fact that was very conspicuous in his land. His words mean, You will have abundant opportunity to help the poor as long as you live. "Life has its constant duties, but it has also its special moments; and the heart is made stronger for the ordinary duties by being allowed to luxuriate in the special moments" (Macpherson).

9. *The common people of the Jews.* Pilgrims on their way to the Passover Feast.—*They came.* Into the house, no doubt, as it was customary for strangers to enter and look on at the time of a banquet.

11. *That they might see Lazarus also.* The excitement which the restoring of Lazarus to life created (Jn. 11.47-53) was not abated.—*Went away.* Went over to Jesus, believed in Jesus.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *So they made him a supper there.* The word which is here translated *supper* is derived from the same root as the word *evening*. It is the principal meal of the day in Syria. Oriental churches observe the Saturday which precedes Palm Sunday as the anniversary of that *aasha*, and call it "The Sabbath of Lazarus." On that day the people make bread-offerings in the churches, and the native school-children in a body, led by their teachers, visit every home and perform a sort of play based on the facts recorded in John 11. The play is in Arabic verse.—Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie, in "Sunday School Times."

Family gatherings were very common among the Jews, and entertainments in honor of special guests were by no means infrequent. It was the established custom for the friends of a man who had recovered from a severe illness to celebrate the event with a feast. Such gatherings were almost public affairs, for the villagers were wont to come in uninvited and look on at the festivities. The guests left their sandals at the door. Leaning on their left elbows, they reclined on low couches on either side of a long, low table in the center of the room. Servants placed a basin under their feet and then poured water over them, and special honor was shown a guest by pouring a fragrant oil upon his head.

3. *The house was filled with the odor of the ointment.* Orientals are still



Alabaster Cruses

very fond of perfumes. "In the shops especially devoted to the sale of perfumes are to be found many varieties of scents, ointments, and essences quite puzzling to a Western druggist. The pastry and confectionery sold on the streets are all scented. The garments of the richly dressed ladies who pass along the streets of an oriental city all smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, and of a great many other things recognizable only to the professional expert."

Pouring fragrant ointment upon the hair of a guest was the customary way of showing him honor. In the "Talmud" we are told: "The school of Shammal saith, He holds sweet oil in his right hand and a cup of wine in his left. He says grace first over the oil, and then over the wine. He blesseth the sweet oils and anoints the head of him that serves." A resident of Constantinople writes that at social gatherings servants bring in censers of burning perfumes, and they dip sprigs into perfumed water and sprinkle the guests.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Where is Bethany? What great deed had Jesus done for the Bethany family? What was the value of a shilling, as we learned in the lesson about the Feeding of the Five Thousand? In what lesson did Jesus show his regard for economy? What instance of the poor remaining after Jesus had finished his work was given in a lesson of last year?

At the Feast of Dedication. This feast, which commemorated, not an Old Testament event, but the cleansing of the temple from the pollutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, fell about the middle of December. It happened at this feast, John tells us immediately after our last lesson, that Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch when the Jews came to him and said: "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." "I have told you," Jesus answered: "and my works bear witness, but you do not believe. You are not among my sheep who know my voice and follow me, whom my Father has given to me." When Jesus added, "I and the Father are one," the Jews took up stones to kill him. Calmly Jesus asked them for which of his good works they would stone him. They would stone him "for blasphemy," they answered, "because he made himself God." Defending his claim by an argument based on the Old Testament Scripture and by the argument of his own works, Jesus somewhat calmed the excited Pharisees so that instead of stoning him they attempted to arrest him, but he escaped and crossed the Jordan to the place where John had baptized, and here many believed on him. (During the three months spent here in Perea occurred the events and discourses of Luke 11.1-17.10.)

The Effect of the Raising of Lazarus. From Perea Jesus went to Bethany and raised Lazarus from the dead, the crowning miracle which we studied as our Easter lesson. You recall that when their Master proposed going to Bethany the disciples objected, saying, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" And when Jesus declared his determination to go, Thomas said unto his brother-disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with him."

Many of those who saw Lazarus raised from the dead believed in Jesus as the Christ, but other hostile ones reported the event to the Pharisees in Jerusalem. The chief priests and Pharisees met to decide what they should do. "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation," they declared, and then Caiaphas, the high priest, declared it expedient for them that Jesus should die, and from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death. Therefore Jesus tarried for a time in the city of Ephraim, whither he had gone, till he was ready to set his face toward Jerusalem for the last time. (Now occurred the events and discourses of Mt. 19 and 20; Mk. 10; Lk. 17.11-19.28.)

The Last Passover in the Life of Jesus. As the time for the Passover drew near, the Jews flocked to Jerusalem, and the question was often debated there whether or not Jesus would appear in the Temple as at former Passovers. The Sanhedrin had given orders that whoever knew where Jesus was should make it known to them.

The Date of the Anointing of Jesus. Jesus therefore six days before the Passover came to Bethany, says John. Reckoning the day on which the Paschal Supper was eaten as one of the six days, as was the Jewish custom

of computing time, six days before would be the Sabbath, or Saturday, the day before the Triumphal Entry. Matthew and Mark connect it with events which occurred only two days before the feast. Some scholars believe that John gave his account earlier in order not to let it interrupt his story of the last days of Jesus in Jerusalem, but the preferable view is that John gave the correct note of time, while the Synoptists recorded it out of its chronological order so as to present the motive it offers for Judas' betrayal.

Write on your blackboard the following statement, and each week add the events for each day as we study them, so as to have before your pupils' eyes the correct order of the last week in the life of Jesus.

Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, April 1, 30 A.D. Arrival at Bethany: Anointing at Supper. Mt. 26.6-13; Mk. 14.3-9; Jn. 11.55-12.11.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After the raising of Lazarus Jesus went northward to Ephraim, on the borderland between Judea and Samaria. Later he crossed the Jordan into Perea. Now he has recrossed the Jordan at the ford opposite Jericho and gone on to Bethany, where the anointing by Mary took place.

Assign paragraphs 136, 138, 139 and 131 in "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Do you know what the word *criticism* means? Censure, fault-finding? Yes, but is that all? The dictionary definition says that to criticize is to express one's views as to the merits or demerits of a person or thing. Please note that the word *merits* comes first! Do you use every opportunity you find to express your appreciation of the merits of a pupil? In no better way can you diminish the faults which you have been wont to criticize. The superintendent of a division of the Pennsylvania Railroad had been in the habit of posting a "black list" which contained the names of delinquent employees. That list aroused resentment. Then he tried posting instead a "white list" giving each month the names of those employees whose service and conduct had been worthy of approbation. This list has stimulated endeavor, and very soon after this new plan was adopted the cases requiring discipline decreased by two-thirds. Jesus always spoke the word of approval. He appreciated Mary's loving gift and said so. We have many of his words of appreciation: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"; "Thou hast well said"; "Thou hast answered right"—many similar words have come down to us. Do not be chary of your words of commendation—whether of conduct or of answers to questions, of preparation of home work or of prompt and regular attendance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The marvelous story of how Jesus brought Lazarus to life after he had been in the tomb four days has been repeated from one to another till every one in Jerusalem is talking about Jesus and wondering whether or not he will come to the Passover. They know that the rulers have determined to put him to death if he comes, and some are hoping he will stay away, while others are eager to see what the rulers will really do.

Jesus started for Jerusalem, and on his way stopped at a home in Bethany. Whom in this home did he love? Many people in Bethany wished to honor Jesus in some way, and a man called Simon the Leper, whose leprosy Jesus had no doubt cured, gave a feast and invited friends to meet Jesus. Who were among the guests? The villagers were there, full of excitement at seeing Jesus again. Lazarus was there, quiet and thoughtful. Martha was busily engaged in helping the host care for so many people. Jesus' thoughts were far different from those of the others: before him he saw the cross toward which he was hastening. Judas was thinking how different his life with Jesus had been from what he had expected, how disappointed he was that Jesus had not been made a king, and how he hated the life and even the Master. Mary's heart was overflowing with gratitude and love to Jesus for restoring her brother to life, and as she looked at her beloved Teacher she wondered how she could show him her love. What did she do?

For Older Pupils. When we have known some man only in business or public life and then are given a glimpse of him in his home, it comes almost

with a shock of surprise to find that there is this other side of his life and this other aspect of his nature. We have to judge the man anew. Do you not have something of this same sort of surprise when you think about Jesus in the Bethany home? Do you not gain a new view of his great Nature as you meditate upon what that home meant to him, with its understanding and helpfulness and love? It is as if a shut door had suddenly opened and as we behold the privacy and intimacy and tenderness and peace, we realize how limited has been our earlier view.

Today we open that door. We know what is going on outside that home where Jesus loved to be. "There is the storm and stress, all the hardness of that last public appearance; there is the tremendous historic crisis, there is the gathering ruin. There is attack pelting him in all directions; there is repulse, challenge, deadly war. He has to fight warily day by day, the fires about him so scathing, and all in argument, and in quarrel and retort; and the faces, the hard, bitter faces of Herodian, and Sadducee, and Pharisee, and lawyer, and scribe, ringing him round; it is tremendous to the end, of the tragic hour coming. There is to be tumult and anxiety and agony and death.

"All that outside, and then every evening the retreat. One step, and a door opens; and inside, another world; the hidden life, all sheltered in rest and in quiet; tender hands about him, and gracious ministries and kind looks. What relief and release."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I PRICELESS THINGS

People Like Judas. Judas posed as practical and benevolent. Mary he thought foolish and unrestrained. He considered himself utilitarian, Mary he judged wasteful and improvident. At first glance, his criticism seems well grounded. There must have been many things which Jesus needed more than expensive ointment. Then, besides Jesus, there were the poor; how much the price of the ointment would have meant to them! So the criticism seems specious; yet, every true instinct tells us that Judas was wrong.

Why was Judas wrong? Because he had not learned that there are things which can neither be bought nor sold. He could put a price on spikenard but not on Mary's love and worship. He had kept the bag. He had put money in it, and had come to think that it was the only treasury; that wealth consisted only of money or of what money could buy. He did not realize that Christ has a treasury and that in it there is a place for even the useless deeds; he did not know that many of the greatest things in life are those for which there is no outward equivalent.

There are still such people as Judas, and, under the pressure of the temporalities, we all tend to join their ranks. They are the people who would give little place in life to art or literature or music; who think a man unsuccessful unless he has grown rich; who are concerned only with actions and care nothing for ideas. These are the people who can get on without the Church, who regard religion as a thing shadowy, visionary, unpractical, who set down as waste the emotions of Christian hearts and the sacrifices of Christian lives. It is the voice of Judas which you hear when anyone asks, Why preach to people; would it not be better to feed them? Why should I give my money to a church; would it not be better to give it to a hospital?—Condensed from a Sermon by F. B. Macpherson.

A Beautiful Expression of Gratitude for a Priceless Rose. It was in the spacious corridor of the Clifton Springs sanitarium. I sat in my wheel-chair, waiting for the elevator. Probably I was a pitiable enough figure, even when sights that elicit pity are common enough—a young man with hopes and plans and strength enough of mind and body, save for the two wasted legs which would not carry me a step. I noticed the tall, stately figure of Dr. Kelly coming down the hall (what would I not have given to stand upright and walk like that?); I saw him go to the florist's display of flowers on yonder table; I noticed him buying one solitary rose, and then, to my amazement, coming straight to my chair. I do not remember that he said a thing about the rose or the act. He just gave it to me. Probably I was able to murmur

a "Thank you," but not much more. I do just recall that, as I rolled my chair into the elevator, I heard a wonderfully kind and cheery voice say, "I feel as if I'd like to do something for you." Among many kindnesses that dispelled the monotony and despair of my life in a wheel-chair, that simple one will always stand out the brightest—the courtliness of it, the simplicity of it, the tactful insight to dismiss it with a sentence which I shall never forget as characteristic of one of God's noblemen, "I feel as if I'd like to do something for you."

I could not refrain from paying this little tribute, while he is alive, to the man who seems to be so busy doing simple acts of kindness, saying words that revive hope and courage in disheartened souls.—John L. Cole, author of "Wheel Chair Philosophy," in "Zion's Herald."

II ANOINT THE LIVING

Suffer Her to Keep It Against the Day of My Burying. That word changes everything. The sunlight fades out, and a wave of infinite sadness rushes over the hearts of the feasters. In the great ceremonial feasts of Egypt it was customary when the mirth ran highest to introduce a train of mourners bearing a dead man on his bier, that the feasters might remember man was mortal. It is as though such a thing had happened in this house at Bethany. No throb of funeral music shook the air, indeed, no slow company of mourners passed through the chamber, following that dread effigy of silence on the lifted bier; but the effect was the same. An ineffaceable vision flashed upon all the feasters for an instant—they saw their Jesus dead. Who among them would grudge the dead his last anointing? What man among them would think frankincense and myrrh too precious for the dead Master? But they begrudged it to him living—ah, it is there that the saying of Christ becomes so poignant. They grudged him the gift of Mary as we grudge the frankness and tenderness of affection to those we love when they are with us—giving them scant words and cold glances, and little sympathy or consideration—until a day comes when all our words are spoken to deaf ears, and our tears fall fruitlessly upon a frozen forehead. "Oh, the anguish of the thought," says George Eliot in one of the most memorable and pathetic passages of her writings, "that we can never atone to our dead for the stunted affection we gave them, for the little reverence we showed to that sacred human soul that lived so close to us, and was the divinest thing God had given us to know."—W. J. Dawson, in "The Reproach of Christ."

Be merciful, O our God!
Forgive the meanness of our human hearts,
That never till the noble soul departs,
See half the worth, or hear the angel's wings
Till they go rustling heavenward as he springs
Up from the mourned sod. —Edward Rowland Sill.

The Gift which All Need. There is no one so strong and self-reliant that he does not need the help that comes from the knowledge that others believe in him and love him. A story in the "Youth's Companion" illustrates this truth. "In the winter of 1864, an old Quaker lady visited Lincoln at the White House, and took the long-suffering giant's down-stretched hand. She had to rise on tip-toe, and as she did it her sweet voice uttered some words difficult to catch. It is not possible to give the words of either exactly, but this is their purport: Yes, friend Abraham, thee need not think thee stands alone. We are all praying for thee. The hearts of all the people are behind thee, and thee can not fail. The Lord has appointed thee, the Lord will sustain thee, and the people love thee. Yea, as no man was ever loved before, does this people love thee. Take comfort, friend Abraham. God is with thee. The people are behind thee.' The effect of the words was easy to see. As when the lights suddenly blaze behind a cathedral window, so the radiance illumined those rugged features and poured from the wonderful eyes. The gaunt form straightened. The mouth became beautiful in its sweetness, as it said to her: 'You have given a cup of cold water to a very thirsty and grateful man. You have done me a great kindness.'"

Too Late. "What can you tell me of your neighbor?" asked the Angel-who-looks-into-things.

"Oh, an excellent person!" said the Busy Man. "Full of wisdom and virtue; merry, too, withal; in short, a delightful companion."

"You have been much together, then?" asked the Angel-who-looks-into-things.

"Well, scarcely that," replied the Busy Man; "in fact, I have been so excessively busy that I have seen nothing of him for a long time. But now, I have every intention of doing so; indeed, I think I will ask him to dine with me tonight."

"You can hardly do that!" said the Angel.

"Why not?"

"Because he died this morning."—Laura E. Richards, in "The Silver Crown."

III SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD

What Our Golden Text Means. "She hath done what she could" is an expression often used to excuse one for not doing more, an apology for scant measure of service, whereas Jesus used the words to express his appreciation of the fact that Mary had done her utmost to honor him, had done all that she could do, had given him uncalculating devotion. The disciples objected to her gift because it was so great; Jesus in approving her gift revealed how great it was, greater even than she herself fully realized.

"The saying implies a stringent demand, as well as a gracious defence," writes Dr. Maclaren. "Nothing less than the full measure of ability is the measure of Christian obligation. Power to its last particle is duty. Jesus does not ask how much his servants do or give, but he does ask that they should do or give all that they can. He wishes us to be ourselves in serving him, and to shape our methods according to character and capabilities, but he also wishes us to give him our whole selves."

Where Effort, not Results, Count. In Florence, Italy, is a manufactory for handmade lace. It was founded and endowed by Robert Barrett Browning as a memorial to his father and mother. Hundreds of women in the villages scattered about Florence bring their work to this Browning Memorial. Most of it is very beautiful, for the workers are paid not for the quantity but for the quality of their lace. The rare and costly pieces are eagerly bought by those who delight in such things, and can afford them.

One day a poor woman more than eighty years old came to the Browning Memorial to sell her lace. Her husband had been drowned at sea, her son had been killed in the war, and alone in her old age she was struggling to care for two grandchildren. She brought an elaborate piece of lace upon which she had worked steadily for three months, but her eyes were failing and her fingers unsteady, and the lace was crude and uneven.

"What shall we do with it?" asked the superintendent, showing the lace to Mr. Browning. "It is worthless, but I dread sending the poor old woman away."

"Pay her for it, and give it to me," said Mr. Browning. "She has done the best she could."

So for several years the old woman came, each three months, hobbling on her cane and bringing her lace, and with comfort and gladness in her heart she went hobbling away again carrying her silver tied in the corner of her handkerchief.

Only when we have continued to the end, doing our utmost and doing our best, may we be comforted by the knowledge that it is the effort and not the results, which will win the reward. Then we may go confidently into the presence of the Master of the works and present the lace which we have made with so intricate a pattern and so much labor. There will be many faults, many uneven, and broken, and tangled threads, but through it all, if we have been faithful, the Master will be able to trace *the design*, and he will look it over without reproach, saying, "Pay her for it, and give it to me; she has done the best she could."—Condensed from an Article in "The Christian Herald."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. The thing that gives fragrance to a drop of perfume is that it is the extract from a thousand flowers compressed into a drop: the thing that gives force and flavor to a kind deed is that it is the triple extract of

a thousand kind thoughts, distilled in the soul and released as required.—Dr. Griffin W. Bull.

Verse 4. The mole blames the eagle for soaring, and thinks grubbing and burrowing the only proper mode of action.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 5. Poetry must not be extinguished on the urgency of pence.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Verse 5. "The name of charity covers a good many more sins than it can conceal."

Verse 7. The greater part of a deed is its motive.—Dr. Maclaren.

Verse 8.

A rose to the living is more
Than sumptuous meats to the dead. —Nixon Waterman.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"Let me be careful not to discourage the warm, spontaneous, expansive emotions of the soul as they are evoked by the presence of Jesus and the claims of his kingdom."

Jesus appreciated the banquet. Do something like this today—not only have the open door to the oppressed; go find some one who feels that the world is against him, some fellow who is under suspicion and whose heart is breaking of neglect. Then if you have no home, go to some quiet restaurant, secure a table for four or five friends, and ask the lonely one to lunch with you and your friends. Your little attention may turn a tragedy into a triumphal procession.—Dr. Griffin W. Bull.

The passing man is your pressing chance—seize it or you will lose it forever. Men whom you can help are here today and gone tomorrow. Think of the chances you have overlooked, opportunities you would die to regain. Many a fine monument tells the pathetic story of trying to do something for the dead, which was not done for the living. What has become of the fellow of whom you said, "I am going to do something for him *some day*"? If he is still within reach, thank heaven, and redeem your painful procrastination promptly before he passes out of sight. Remember today: "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is a sin."—Dr. Griffin W. Bull.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Appreciation of the living. See the Second Topic.
2. The teaching of Jesus concerning the poor. See Chapter V of Peabody's "Jesus Christ and the Social Question."
3. "Ought a man to feel that he is not free to use any money in gifts of friendship or charity until he has first paid all his debts?"

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the account of the Triumphal Entry in all four Gospels. (Mt. 21.1-11; Mk. 11.1-11; Lk. 19.29-44; Jn. 12.12-19.) 2. What is the meaning of *Hosanna*? 3. Read Psalm 118. 4. What does Matthew say about the way in which the whole city was stirred? (Mt. 21.10, 11.) 5. What was the criticism of the Pharisees and how did Jesus rebuke them? (Lk. 19.39, 40.) 6. How did the sight of Jerusalem affect Jesus and why? (Lk. 19.41-44.) 7. A few days later what was it that the Jerusalem multitude shouted in regard to Jesus? (Lk. 23.21, 23.) 8. How does John's Gospel rank as literature? (*Guide*, p. 28.)

Questions to Think About. 1. On what day of the week was the Triumphal Entry? 2. How many days was it before the crucifixion? 3. What do we call the Sunday before Easter? Why? 4. Why is the event usually called the Triumphal Entry? 5. After the feeding of the five thousand Jesus refused to be acclaimed king: why did he consent now? (*Guide*, p. 173.) 6. What did the event signify to Jesus? 7. To the disciples? 8. To the rulers? 9. Did the Greeks see Jesus? 10. If they did, do you think they were disappointed to find him so unassuming, or could they discern the majesty and divinity back of the lowliness?

Note-Book Work. Write, "XV Jesus Anointed at Bethany."

JESUS WELCOMED AS KING

Golden Text

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,
even the King of Israel. John 12:13

LESSON John 12:12-26; verses 12-19 printed MEMORIZE verses 12, 13

12 On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. 14 And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon: as it is written, 15 Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. 16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. 17 The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness. 18 For this cause also the multitude went and met him, for that they heard that he had done this sign. 19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Triumphal Entry, 12-19.
 1. The Acclamation of the Multitude from Jerusalem, 12-13.
 2. The Royal Progress of the King, 14, 15.
 3. The Attitude of the Disciples, 16.
 4. The Attitude of the Multitude, 17-18.
 5. The Attitude of the Pharisees, 19.
- II. The Coming of the Greeks, 20-26.
 1. Asking for an Interview, 20-22.
 2. What their Coming Meant to Jesus, 23.
 3. His True Glory to be Won through Death, 24-25.
 4. Sacrifice to be the Portion of His Followers also, 26.

12. *On the morrow.* See the last lesson. It is the day which we now call Palm Sunday.—*A great multitude.* The common people, RVm. God must have loved the common people in Jerusalem, for he made so many of them, to use Lincoln's expression

13. *Branches of the palm trees.* Palms were emblematical of victory and rejoicing among the Hebrews as well as among the Greeks. See Rev. 7:9.—*Hosanna.* The Hebrew word meant "Save now." As used by the multitude it seems to have become a word of greeting, like our "Hail." Compare the expression "God save the king!"—*Blessed is he . . . Israel.* These words are from the Messianic Psalm, 118, the last one of the five "Hallel" Psalms which were sung by the people as they wended their way around the altar at the great feasts. Their use upon this occasion indicated that the people recognized Jesus as the Messiah. "Misled by their rulers, the multitudes assisted at the crucifixion, but the unsophisticated heart recognized the Deliverer, and strewed his path with palms. The intellect of the great is oftener wrong than the heart of the simple."

14. *Having found a young ass.* See p. 173. The horse was the symbol of war; the ass, of peace.

15. *Fear not.* See Zech. 9:9.

16. *These things understood not his disciples at the first.* These are the Evangelist's words. "Men may be in the midst of great mercies and actings, and may not only be witnesses of the Lord's working and the works of others, but even actors themselves in that which for the time they do little or nothing understand."

19. *The Pharisees therefore said among themselves.* "The comment of the Pharisees was one of those words like the word of Caiaphas (11:50) which say

a great deal more than the original speaker meant. 'Behold, how you prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him.' So still. His foes prevail nothing. He abides. It is with the living Word as it is with the written Word. The hammer wears out. The anvil remains" (Speer).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

*13. *Took the branches of the palm trees.* Herodotus tells us that when Xerxes crossed the bridge on the Hellespont his way was strewn with branches of myrtle. First Maccabees contains the account of the entering into Jerusalem of Simon Maccabæus "with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees, and with harps, and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs."

14. *And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon.* Oriental nations assigned a very high value to the ass, which is said to have been of a more stately and handsome appearance than the ignoble animal of the same kind found in countries farther north. Like the mule, it was preferred to a horse for riding by men of the highest rank. The colt "whereon no man ever yet sat" was chosen because the conception of purity or fitness for sacred uses was especially connected in the minds of ancient Jews and Gentiles with an animal that had not yet performed any labor.—Schaeffer.

20. *There were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast.* An old tradition says that the Greeks who sought to speak with him at his last visit to the Temple, had been sent by the king of Edessa to offer him sanctuary from the malice of the Jews; and though the tradition may be a pious romance, it serves to show that, in the view of the primitive church, he could have found escape from the cross by meeting Gentile good will half-way.—Thomas G. Selby, in "The Strenuous Gospel."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When had the people wished to make Jesus king and he had refused? What "sign," had led them to this wish? How did he escape from them? In what other ways has he sought to avoid public acclaim? What man is famous because he came seeking Jesus? What did he learn in that interview?

Why Jesus Entered Jerusalem in Triumph. On Christ's part, the triumphal entry was an assertion of his kingship. It was deliberately planned for, as the other Evangelists tell us, and all Jerusalem knew that Jesus claimed to be a king; but they did not know that his kingship was "not of this world." Do we wonder that Jesus sought such an entry into Jerusalem? Have we not often heard him caution some one not to report a miracle he had wrought, or charge the disciples to "tell no man that he is the Christ"? And after the feeding of the Five Thousand we saw him hiding among the hills when the people sought to make him king. He seemed constantly to fear that the popular enthusiasm would hinder his work of teaching. Now, however, another purpose is impelling him to seek publicity, to court the enthusiastic applause of the people, to let the world know that he is the Messiah. He no longer dreads interruption to his work. His hour has come.

Chronology for Blackboard.

Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath; April 1, A.D. 30. Arrival at Bethany; Anointing at Supper. Mt. 26.6-13; Mk. 14.3-9; Jn. 11.55-12.11.

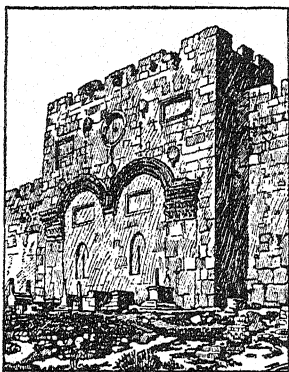
Sunday (Palm Sunday), April 2. Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem; Healing and Hosannas in the Temple; Return to Bethany. Mt. 21.1-10, 14-17; Mk. 11.11-11; Lk. 19.29-44; Jn. 12.12-19.

Monday, April 3. Return to Jerusalem; Cursing of the Fig Tree; Cleansing the Temple(?); Return to Bethany; Conspiracy of Enemies. Mt. 21.12-22; Mk. 11.12-20; Lk. 19.45-48.

Tuesday, April 4. Fig-Tree Withered; Jesus' Authority Challenged; Three Parables of Warning; Three Questions by the Jewish Rulers; Jesus' Unanswerable Question; Woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees; The Widow's Mites; the Greeks Seeking Jesus; the Jews' Rejection of Jesus; Discourse concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem and the End of the World; Three Parables; Judas' Bargain with the Chief Priests. Mt. 21.20-46; 22, 23; 24; 25; 26.1-16; Mk. 11.20-33; 12; 13; 14.1-10; Lk. 20; 21; 22.1-6; Jn. 12.20-50.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jesus probably remained in the Bethany house the night of the anointing, and the next day, the first day of the week, he went to Jerusalem. He went over the southern of the three routes which cross the Mount of Olives, passed *Bethpage*, where the ass was secured, crossed the Brook Kidron, whose deep, narrow valley separates the Mount of Olives from the city, and then made his triumphal entry through the Golden Gate, as tradition says, that gate in the eastern wall which was found walled up in the time of the Crusades and was opened only once a year, on Palm Sunday. It is now kept closed.



The Golden Gate

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Palm Sunday has been observed for several years as decision day in the Sunday Schools of one of the great denominations. Every year large numbers of conversions have been reported as the result of concentrated and intelligent effort. Commemorating, as it does, the triumphal entry of the Master when the children sang their glad hosannas, they deem Palm Sunday peculiarly fitting as the occasion when the children of today shall acknowledge him as their Lord.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. San Romao is a small village in Brazil. An agent of the American Bible Society was resting there one Sunday under the shade of a great tree, when he suddenly heard the noise and crude music of a crowd that was marching out of the town. In the midst of the crowd was a small donkey, all gaily decorated. This animal is never used for ordinary purposes, but is carefully kept for just this procession which they hold once a year. Can you guess what it celebrates? It was in memory of the time when Jesus rode into Jerusalem upon an ass.

For Older Pupils. Do you recall Lew Wallace's account in "Ben Hur" of the Triumphal Entry? In these words of the Egyptian he has well voiced the expectations that must have been current at Jerusalem:

"I saw your dreamy Caesar make his entry into Jerusalem. You told us he would that day proclaim himself king of the Jews from the steps of the Temple. I beheld the procession descend the mountains bringing him. I heard their singing. There were beautiful palms in motion. I looked everywhere among them for a figure with a promise of royalty—a horseman in purple, a chariot with a driver in shining brass, a sturdy warrior behind an orbbed shield, rivaling his spear in stature. I looked for his guard. It would have been pleasant to have seen a prince of Jerusalem and a cohort of the legions of Galilee."

And then the Egyptian tells how the King actually entered the city. "Instead of a Caesar helmeted and sworded, I saw a Man, riding an ass's colt, and in tears. I said to myself: 'Wait. In the Temple he will glorify himself as becomes a hero about to take possession of the world.' I saw him enter the Gate of Shushan and the Court of the Women. I saw him stop and stand before the Gate Beautiful. There were people with me on the porch and in the courts, and in the cloisters, and on the steps of the three sides of the Temple there were other people—I will say a million people, all waiting breathlessly to hear his proclamation. The pillars were not more still than we. . . . The King of the World drew his gown about him and walked away, and out by the farthest gate, nor opened his mouth to say a word."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I AM THE KING

How Do We Receive Our King? Let us set our own soul on that rocky hill and see Christ come to it. Long heard of, not a stranger, having often

passed before our sight, at last he comes finally and formally to claim us for his own, to solemnly assert that we belong to him, to bid us make our choice whether we will take him for our King or not. Such days do come to all of us—days when we feel as if the Savior, who had been long tempting us, had gathered up all his power of appeal and expected to be then either accepted or rejected; days when the chance of a new spiritual life seems to stand with peculiar solemnity before our heart. Such days are to us what Palm Sunday was to Jerusalem. He loves as us he loved that city, with a love full of reproach and accusation. He stops as he comes in sight of us, and “beholds the city, and weeps over it.” I can think of no picture which so lets me into the very depths of the soul of Christ as he approaches a soul of man which he longs to save, as that which depicts him stopping on the Mount of Olives, where Jerusalem first comes in sight, and beholding the city, and weeping over it. And so he claims our hearts. An intruder and a King at once he seems to those hearts as he stands there on their threshold. There is something in every one of them that says to him, “Come in, come in!” There is something, too, in every one of them that rises up at his coming and says, “Begone, begone! We will not have this Man rule over us.” But through their tumult, their struggle, Christ, whether he be King or intruder, whether he be welcomed or rejected, goes on his way, pressing on into each heart’s most secret places, claiming always that he and he alone is the heart’s King.

And the struggle in every heart cannot keep on evenly for ever. Every heart has to decide. Jerusalem had to decide. Before the week was over she had decided. On Friday she crucified Christ. Still even round the cross there were love and faith and lamentation. But they were crushed and only heard in sobs. The hatred had triumphed, and Jerusalem had crucified her King. And so must every Jerusalem decide. So must your heart say finally to Jesus, “Come,” or “Go.” He never will go until you obstinately bid him. He cannot come into the inmost temple until you welcome him.

Do I talk parables? Let me speak as plainly as I can. The moment that you trust Christ’s forgiveness, and in profound gratitude give yourself to his service, casting every reluctance and doubt aside, that moment he begins the purification and salvation of your life which shall go on throughout eternity. May some one, may many of you, do that today.—Condensed from “Sermons for the Church Year,” by Phillips Brooks.

The Glorification of the King of the World. Andrew and Philip came to tell Jesus of the desire of the Greeks to see him, and Jesus uttered these exultant words, “The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.” Up to this time the glory of the Christ had been veiled. John had seen it, as he bore record early in his Gospel: “We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father”—he had seen it on the Mount of Transfiguration. But to only a few had glimpses of his glory been vouchsafed, to the world he had been the lowly Nazarene. The coming of the Greeks told him God’s hour had struck, the time was at hand when his glory was to be made known to all the world.

“And what event was it, the prospect of which stirred Jesus to this rapture of spirit?” questions an English writer, the Rev. J. D. Jones, in “The Hope of the Gospel.” “The very word ‘glory’ suggests outward splendor and pomp and magnificence. For instance, perhaps I may be allowed to say that the day of our king’s coronation was the day of his glorification. When, amid the booming of guns and the plaudits of the people, King George passed in his splendid robes of state into the Abbey of Westminster, where all the rank and wealth and talent of this land and the Britains beyond the seas were already assembled together, and there had the orb and sceptre placed in his hands and the royal crown placed on his head, while the assembled multitude did homage to him—by that series of symbolic acts the glory of the king as lord of the mightiest empire the world has ever known was manifested and revealed. Was something like that going to happen to Jesus? Were the leaders of the people about to establish him upon the throne of David his father? Was he about to exchange the lowly Nazarene cottage for a palace, and the seamless cloak for the royal robe?

“No, that is not how I read. Well, then, what was the ‘glorification’ to which Jesus looked with such eager anticipation? The context will help

us to our answer. 'The hour is come,' he said, 'that the Son of man should be glorified.' And then he added: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.' 'And die!' It was of dying Jesus was thinking! It was not David's throne but the bitter Cross that loomed up before his vision. That was how Jesus was going to be glorified—by dying. He was looking forward, not to an hour of vindication, but to an hour of rejection; not to an hour of acclamation and applause, but to an hour of awful and deadly shame; not to being led into Jerusalem to sit on David's throne, but to being led out of Jerusalem to suffer on Calvary's hill. And yet as the Lord thought of that shameful Cross and that ghastly death, he was stirred to exultation and triumph. 'The hour is come,' he cried, 'that the Son of man should be glorified.'

"It seems a strange thing to glory in—a cross! It seems a strange hour to look forward to as the hour of his glorification—an hour when he should be the object of all Jerusalem's insult and reviling and contempt. And yet, strange as it was, our Lord was right. The hour of his outward humiliation was the hour of his eternal glorification. The cross which the Jews meant for shame has become his throne of power and glory. 'God forbid,' cries Paul as he thinks of it, 'that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' An infinitely glorious and splendid thing—that was what the Cross was to Paul. And that is what it is also to me. If I were asked where Christ's glory is most splendidly and subduingly displayed, I should not point to the Holy Mount, where he was so transfigured that his raiment became white and glistening; not to Palm Sunday, when he rode in lowly triumph into Jerusalem while the crowds sang Hosanna; I would point to that day when, on a cross on Calvary's hill, with a robber on his right and a robber on his left, while all Jerusalem mocked and scorned, he suffered without the gate.

'For what glory could any one have—even Jesus himself—more exalted than this—the glory of being a Savior? The glory of saving men's souls from death? And Jesus thought of the multitudes who would be set free from the law of sin and death, and who would be loosed from their sins by his blood, and he gloried in his dying. 'He sang a hymn,' we read, as he passed out of the upper room to face the spitting and the scourging and the Cross. And the hymn was no doleful minor chant either, but a song of exultation and triumph. 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' 'Dealt bountifully'? Yes. For our Lord saw the multitude which no man could number, of all kindreds and peoples and tongues, who would wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, and at the thought of that multitude he sang. Death was not defeat, but glory. 'For the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame.' He welcomed the hour of his sacrifice. 'The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.'"

II WE WOULD SEE JESUS

An Earnest Desire. Their desire tells not curiosity but earnestness, and the very earnestness reveals both purpose and attitude towards Jesus. This is made plain by the very words they use as they seek out the likeliest man of the Master's inner circle to secure the coveted interview. They say, "Sir, *we would see Jesus*." The whole story of conviction, of earnestness, of decision, is in that tremendous little word *would*. It was their will, their deliberate choice, to come into personal relations with this Man of whom they were hearing so much.—Dr. S. D. Gordon, in "Quiet Talks on John's Gospel."

The Forerunners of All Men. "Sir, we would see Jesus," said the Greeks. Did they see him, see his form and face? No man knows. Strangely enough, the writer seems to have quite overlooked that part in the story. Those Greeks are left standing forever with their request on their lips. Would that some master-hand could paint them! He would show us by the picture that to see Jesus as he was seen by John that day is so much more than to see him bodily, that one might well forget those Greeks with their earnest request. For, in what follows, the writer unveils the heart of this Man of Galilee. The pathos of his patience, the romance of his discerning hope, the tender grace and strength of his life of self-giving for men, are seen as in the climax of drama—it is like a tableau in soft, full light.

His first words were, "The hour is come." He seemed to be thinking, "So Greeks have come to see me—these men of the West have begun to search me out!" For Greeks were of the West in those days and to Jews of Palestine.

He spoke as if he saw the world-light on those Greek faces. "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." He showed what was in his mind when he went on, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." The Greeks were to him the forerunners of "all men." Think as we may, surely in Jesus there was, as he neared the culmination of his short life in Palestine, a world consciousness transcending all his social and mental environment, which was quite as distinctive as even his sense of union with God as his Father and the Father of men.

But the mystery of his power to draw all these far men unto himself! It was awesome, even to his dauntless spirit. "I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." How he heard the still teaching of his Father's earth! But that *if it die!* Even the heart of the Master quivered at that. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?"

We all know what he said. It was first plaintively human; then it was calmly masterful; and it was divine.—Wm. Allen Knight, in "On the Way to Bethlehem."

Where the World Should See Jesus Today. The request went forth from the Roman world as a challenge to the Early Christian Church. Eventually our Lord was revealed in the lives of poor trembling disciples. Death and suffering to them were merely an entrance to the unspeakable joys beyond. It made cowards brave. It made thieves honest and godly men. The request had been answered, and in less than three centuries the brass eagle fell, to be replaced by the Cross, even though it had been foolishness to the Greek.

Today the world confronts the Christian Church. Its voice is clear and unmistakable. "We would SEE Jesus." He is sought for in our "home life" by those who are under us and who may be in our employ. Our church-going will be of little value if our home-life is not consistent. Those with whom we rub shoulders in business life, those with whom we come into daily contact, want to see Jesus in our lives; to them we are an epistle, read of all men. Yet, how sad it is—so often our religion is only for the Sabbath day; and the one who on Sunday is found praising his Savior, is found in his business life to be disloyal and regardless of him!

But not only does this cry come from the man in the street, it also reaches us from distant shores. The heathen in his darkness, upon whom the light of education and civilization has shined, making him discontented with "bowing down to wood and stone," cries out, "We would see Jesus." But again we have to look at a sad picture. Again and again, we hear from missionaries that the greatest stumbling-blocks to the native seeker after God are the inconsistent or utterly indifferent business men from the Western shores—men who come from a professedly Christian country, yet are disloyal and regardless of their Savior and Lord. This might well be enlarged upon; but the picture is black and sad enough. If our Lord wept when he beheld indifferent and inconsistent Jerusalem, what must be his sorrow when he beholds the indifference and inconsistency of our own country today!

In a certain church over the water the words of our text are written round the inside of the pulpit. We shall do well to have them before us, whatever we do in our Master's service. We have heard the cry, "We would see Jesus," from the little child; we have heard the cry from the vast multitudes of our own land; we have heard the cry from the heathen in far-off lands. But there is yet a still more urgent and important cry. Perhaps we should have taken it first. It is, comparatively, a small thing to serve men; but this cry comes from Almighty God himself.

In the book of Malachi, God is spoken of as a "Refiner of metal" (Mal. 3.2). It is a beautiful simile. The refiner stands watching the molten metal in the crucible. There it is, a black mass of pure metal, but mixed with dross. As the flame plays around the crucible, the dross becomes separated from the pure metal; and then, when the refiner can see the reflection of his own face in the pure metal, he knows that the dross has been removed.

Our Heavenly Father is willing, yea, anxious to remove the dross from our lives. He gave his Only-begotten Son to accomplish it. He longs to see us purified in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He longs to see his own image in us. It is the command of our Lord God himself: "We would see Jesus."—Condensed from a Sermon by R. F. Wright, in "The Christian."

Seeing Jesus Every Day. In "My Lady of the Chimney Corner," Willie Withero, a stone-breaker, is talking to a ragged boy about his mother.

"Willie," says she, "fur twenty years I've seen the Son of Maan ivery day of m' life!"

"How's that?" says I.

"I've more'n seen 'm. I've made tay fur 'im, an' broth on Sunday. I've mended and washed 'is clothes, shuk 'is han', stroked 'is hair an' said kind words to 'im!"

"Yer goin' mad," says I. She tuk her oul Bible an' read t' me these words; I mind thim well:

"Whin ye do it t' o' these craithers ye do it t' me!"

III LET THE CHILDREN PRAISE HIM

The Children Sang Hosannas. In connection with the account of the Triumphal Entry given by Matthew we read:

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the Temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were moved with indignation, and said unto him, Hearst thou what these are saying? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

Where there is a Welcome for the King. When I was in Nazareth I heard the children there sing this song. Can you not make their thoughts yours?

"We are little Nazareth children,
And our Father placed our home
Mid' the olive trees and vineyards
Where the Savior used to roam.

"For the Lord, who loves the children,
And was glad to hear their praise,
Cares that Nazareth children know him,
Do his will and choose his ways.

"Cares that they should keep in memory
All that sacred life spent here;
Try in heart to walk beside him,
Safe and happy in his fear.

"And we know that he is coming,
Every knee to him shall bow—
And the joyous shouts to greet him
Shall begin in Nazareth now.

"Jesus, Savior, dwell within us,
Make a temple of each heart,
Pure and loving, true and holy,
For thy service set apart."

There are Children Who do not Praise the King because They do not Know Him. The life of a little child in the slums and our responsibility for such a life, is well told in this little sketch that comes from the "New York Kindergarten Association."

Benny faces his future with a pair of bright eyes and a friendly grin. What that future will be depends very largely upon Benny. His parents consider that their duty towards him is done when they have provided food—not too much—clothing, and a few blows now and then to curb his exuberance of spirits. His home is small and crowded, and Benny's presence there is not expected nor desired, except for meals and at bedtime. And, as he is under school age, he spends his time in the streets.

While he trundles his cheap velocipede to and fro, those bright eyes of Benny's observe keenly, and his active brain is beginning to put things together;

to have ideas; to formulate principles. In other words, Benny is beginning to build for himself a philosophy of life which will have great influence in shaping the kind of life he is going to lead.

Who helps him in this most critical period of childhood? Nobody. No one warns him, guides him, teaches him. He has to take life absolutely as he finds it, and interpret it as best he can. Therefore, as he roams the streets from morning to night, his lot is very different from the little children who are sheltered and protected, and who grow up in a world that is sweeter and better than the real world. Benny is sheltered and protected from nothing. He fights his way in an environment that is made by crowded, busy people for their own needs, convenience and pleasures, and with no regard for the needs, conveniences and pleasures of such as Benny. If, by the time he is old enough to go to school, his head is not full of the mischief and brutality and badness he sees about him, why he is lucky—and also unusual.

Benny faces his future with a pair of bright eyes and a friendly grin. What will his future be? If it should lead him weeping into the children's court; and later, sullen and defiant, to the Reformatory; and later, still sullen and defiant, to prison—whom shall we blame? Surely not Benny, who as a little bit of a boy learned what was evil before anyone told him what was good.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 18. High-wrought emotion is a poor substitute for steady devotion; but cool, unemotional recognition of Christ as King is just as unnatural.—Dr. Maclaren.

Verse 21. One questioning Greek means that the heathen shall be his inheritance.—Griffin W. Bull.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Is Jesus your Messianic King? "Jesus asks not so much to be garlanded with our wreaths as to be loved; not so much to be saluted with our hosannas as to be loyally served; not so much to be hailed as king all glorious in jeweled crown and robes of purple and gold as to be received into the intimacy of friendship and brotherhood; it is the royalty of influence that he claims rather than the royalty of state."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The nature of Christ's Kingship. See the First Topic.
2. The value of a pageant. See Kelman's "Ephemeria Eternitatis," p. 84.
3. The coming of the Greeks and Christ's discourse. See the Second Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the account of the incidents and words at the Last Supper as given in all the Gospels. (Mt. 26.21-35; Mk. 14.18-31; Lk. 22.21-38; Jn. 13.21-38.) 2. Tell about the preparation made by the disciples for keeping the Passover. (Mk. 14.12-16; Lk. 22.7-13.) 3. What did Jesus say at the beginning of the Passover Supper? (Lk. 22.14-18.) 4. What led Jesus to give his lesson on humility? (Lk. 22.24-30.) 5. Of what two parables is the lesson "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"? (Lk. 14.7-11; 18.9-14.) 6. What does Paul say about preferring others to ourselves in Phil. 2.3? 7. What does he say in that chapter about lowliness of mind being the mind of Christ? 8. What is the Beatitude in regard to the humble? 9. What does Ps. 51.7 say? 10. What does John say in his First Epistle about following the example of Christ? (1 Jn. 2.6.) 11. What lessons for today has John's Gospel? (*Guide*, p. 29.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What does the phrase "Passion Week" mean, and when did it begin? 2. Why did Jesus wash the disciples' feet? 3. What two qualities so characteristic of Peter are shown in this incident? (Impulsiveness, loyalty.) 4. On what other occasion did Peter rebuke Jesus? (Mt. 16.21-23.) 5. Did Jesus by this incident and by his words wish to institute a formal rite patterned after his example? 6. What, then, did he mean by his words in verse 15? 7. Did you ever speak or think of lowly work as "beneath my talents," or "beneath my dignity"? **Memory and Note-Book Work.** Memorize Whittier's stanza, p. 187. In your Note-Book write "XVI Jesus Welcomed as King."

JESUS THE SERVANT OF ALL

Golden Text

Whosoever would be first among you,
shall be servant of all. Mark 10.44

LESSON John 13.1-17: verses 3-15 printed MEMORIZE verses 14, 15

3 *Jesus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, 4 riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself. 5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. A Lesson in Lowliness, 1-11.
 1. Supreme Love, 1.
 2. Supreme Treachery, 2.
 3. Supreme Power, 3.
 4. Lowly Service, 4-5.
 5. Blundering Love, 6-9.
 6. One Exception, 10-11.
- II. The Application of the Lesson, 12-15.
 1. The Arresting Question, 12.
 2. The Great Teacher's Example, 13-15.

3. *Jesus, knowing . . . goeth unto God.* "At this point wonder is excited. We wait almost breathlessly for the next sentence. Unveiled splendors which had been concealed under the guise of his flesh; called angels—host upon host, a dazzling throng,—to bring the crown he had left in heaven? This is our notion of greatness, of pomp, of circumstance. But he does not do any one of the supposed wonderful things which he might have done, but, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, he began to wash the disciples' feet" (Theodore Parker). "In the whole scene we see power conscious of itself but used in service" (Speer).

4. *Riseth from supper.* See "The Historical Background." They had already reclined at table, but no one had performed the customary service of washing the feet.—*Layeth aside his garments.* His outer robe.—*Took a towel.* See Lk. 22.27.

5. *And began to wash his disciples' feet.* "Having loved his own which were in the world, Jesus loved them to the end," verse 1. "In illustration, then, of that love in the hours at the end, this beautiful scene is recalled of how the Master washed the disciples' feet. It is given as a last proof of that wonderful love. It was meant to teach some needful lessons, but primarily it was a spontaneous outburst, the yearning of his heart at the thought

of the approaching separation. The apostle sees more in it than any practical purpose of pointing a moral. He did it not merely that it might be an object lesson to disciples whose minds were full of ambitions and jealousies. For that reason also; but he did it, says the apostle, as part of his inevitable self-expression. The consciousness of his Divine mission and the knowledge of his future glory, far from being restraints in keeping him from the demeaning act were the spur that made him so act. The nearer the end, the more Christ was conscious of his glory, and the more clearly did he show that it was the glory of perfect sacrifice" (Black).

6. *Dost thou wash my feet?* In the Greek the words *ó mou—thou, of me—* are in emphatic contrast at the beginning of the sentence.

7. *Thou shalt understand hereafter.* Partly explained in verses 12-17.

8. *Thou shalt never.* Compare Mt. 16.22. "It is the old, strange mixture of self-conceit and self-disgust: the self-conceit of old, which under the shadow of Hermon had called upon him so stern a rebuke when he had said, 'That be far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee'; the self-disgust which of old, on the Sea of Galilee, had flung him to his knees, with that great cry wrung from his yearning heart, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'" (Farrar).—*Thou hast no part with me.* No part in his fellowship and kingdom. The washing was a symbol of the washing away of sins by the blood of the Lamb of God.

9. Note how complete is the revulsion of feeling in Peter.

10. *Save to wash his feet.* An allusion to the fact that one returning from the public bath was clean except his feet, which were covered with the dust of the road. The words were a parable meaning that one who was morally clean, who was true at heart, needed only to be cleansed from special faults which clung to him in his daily walk. "But the thing in you that's wrong *must* be made right; and it *can* be. Every sin done by the man who is trusting God as his Savior, every such sin *must* be cleansed away. And it *can* be. The feet-washing told this bit of tremendous truth. These men trusted Christ. But their moral feet would get badly messed that night, mired and slimed by passionate betrayal and blasphemous denial and cowardly flight" (S. D. Gordon).—*Not all.* Compare John 6.64, 70. Judas, unlike the other disciples, had not been bathed—he was false through and through. Jesus wished to let Judas see that he was known, and impel him to leave the gathering. See the next verse.

11. *For he knew him.* This verse is John's explanation of Jesus' remark. His words always seemed superfluous to me until I read a Glasgow Professor's explanation. In Aramaic, as in Hebrew, the same word is used to denote "the whole" and "every," and it has the additional peculiarity that the same form is used for masculine and feminine, singular and plural. The words, "Ye are clean, but not all," are, then, one of those cases in which Jesus uses a word in two senses, one obvious sense in which the hearers take it, and one hidden, which is only seen after time for reflection. The disciples supposed Jesus merely meant that each of them, being in a state of ceremonial purity, required only the removal of dust from his feet. What Jesus really meant was that one of the Twelve was morally unclean. This hidden meaning John makes clear in his explanation.

12. *Know ye what I have done to you?* Do you know the meaning of my act?

14. *Ye also ought to wash one another's feet.* Ought to serve others.

15. *For I have given you an example.* "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Mk. 10.45. "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth," Lk. 22.27.—*Ye also should do as I have done to you.* The imitation which Christ wanted was not the doing of this same deed, but the observance of the principles involved, being ever ready to humble one's self to serve others.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *He began to wash the disciples' feet.* In Palestine the washing of feet was a necessity and one of the duties of hospitality. There were no pavements, no stockings were worn, and the shoes or the sandals, which were little more protection than would be the soles alone of our shoes, were removed on entering a house and left at the door. The hot limestone dust made the feet burn, and the cleansing with cooling water was refreshing as

well as needful. Basin and ewer were kept ready for this purpose. The washing was performed by servants, or by the sons of the household as an affectionate duty, and was considered one of the humblest of services.

13. *Ye call me Teacher.* No pupil (disciple) was allowed to call his teacher by his proper name. There were two titles of respect in customary use, *Rabbi*, meaning Master, and *Mar*, meaning Teacher.

15. *Ye also should do as I have done to you.*

The day before Good Friday is called in the Catholic Church Maundy Thursday. The word *Maundy* comes from the Old English word *maunde*, a command, and it was derived from the Latin *mandatum*. After the time of the Apostles it was held by many that the command of Jesus should be fulfilled in the letter, and gradually the custom grew of performing the ceremony on the anniversary of this day. In the Greek Church it became one of its chief sacraments. "In the Greek convents and at the Russian Court it is yet observed with great solemnity. In the papal court, in those of Vienna, Munich, Madrid, Lisbon, and in the cathedrals and convents of the Roman Catholic Church, the command is also literally carried out to this day, the pope, emperor, kings, washing the feet of twelve persons, generally poor old men who receive a small gratuity on the occasion. In Rome, the twelve representatives of the Apostles are seated in the Clementine Chapel, dressed in tunics of white woolen cloth, and the pope, attired in the same plain manner, sprinkles a few drops on the right foot of each, then wipes and kisses it. After this a repast takes place, at which the pope, assisted by his cabinet, serves the twelve men, who, at the close, are permitted to take away the white tunics, the towels with which their feet have been wiped, and a small piece of money."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What have we heard in John's Gospel about Peter? What have we heard about Judas? What have we heard about Jesus' relation to the Father?

What Follows Our Last Lesson in John's Gospel. Chapter XII closes with the Evangelist's statement of the unbelief of the Jews and restatement of Jesus' mission to the world as its Light upon whose reception or rejection men's relation to the Father depends. Chapter XII completes John's account of Jesus' public ministry. The next five chapters give his account of Jesus' last hours with his disciples.

Wednesday of Passion Week. Wednesday was probably spent quietly at Bethany, but we have no record of this day. "The day before that on which the Paschal Lamb was to be slain, with all that was to follow, would be one of rest, a Sabbath to the soul before its great agony." He would pass that day of rest and preparation in quiet retirement, speaking to his disciples of his crucifixion. Portions of the long discourse which John records in Chapters XIV-XVI may have been spoken on this day.

The Paschal Feast and the Lord's Supper. It was late in the afternoon of Thursday when Christ and the disciples reached the upper room where all things were in readiness for the Paschal Feast, the table already supplied with the lamb (though there is no mention of this), the dish of herbs, the thin cakes of unleavened bread, and the cups of wine,



Romans Reclining at Supper

as we learn from the Synoptic Gospels. Probably before reclining on the divan which surrounded the table on three sides, the disciples disputed once again as to who should be considered the greatest—and therefore entitled to the most honored seats. After one of the cups of wine had been blessed and

then drunk by all present, it was customary for the head of the household celebrating the feast to rise and wash his hands. Probably it was at this juncture that Jesus arose, secured a basin of water and girded himself with a towel, and began to teach the disciples a lesson of humility and of the greatness of service by washing their feet.

Later in the evening Jesus openly declared, "Verily, verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me." "Lord, is it I?" questioned each one aloud. "Surely it is not I!" their horrified looks explained. Peter leaned over to John and bade him question their Master, and John whispered in Jesus' ear, "Lord, who is it?" "He it is for whom I shall dip the sop and give it him," whispered Jesus in reply. Taking a bit of unleavened bread and dipping it in the dish of bitter herbs, he handed it to Judas. The others had not heard the question and answer, and they did not understand, and when Jesus dismissed the traitor, saying to him, "What thou doest, do quickly," they thought that Judas was sent forth on some errand. Jesus was now free from the presence of his betrayer, and he could speak freely with his friends.

After the close of the Paschal Feast, when the third cup had been blessed and passed around, Jesus instituted the rite which we call the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, or the Holy Communion. "This day shall be unto you a memorial," the law of the Passover had been, and now Jesus said of his new rite which was to take the place of the Passover observance with his followers, "This do in remembrance of me."

The Time of the Last Supper and of the Washing of the Disciples' Feet. According to John, the Last Supper was partaken of *before* the Passover, and Jesus was crucified at the time that the priests partook of the paschal lamb, Jn. 19.14. According to the Synoptists, the supper was eaten at the time of the feast itself, or rather at the time that the disciples partook of the feast. Various explanations have been made to account for the difference in time, one of them being that Jesus, knowing what would happen on Friday, celebrated the Passover a day ahead of the legal time. The Jewish Encyclopædia gives the only satisfactory explanation. The Passover that year fell on the Sabbath, which began, of course, on Friday evening. The priests held that the law of the Passover was superior to that of the Sabbath, and that the lamb could be sacrificed on Friday evening: the disciples, on the other hand, followed the more rigorous view of the Pharisees, who held that the paschal lamb must be sacrificed on the eve of the fourteenth of Nisan, when the fifteenth coincided with the Sabbath. The time, then, was Thursday evening, the beginning of the fourteenth of Nisan, April 6, A. D. 30, the day before the crucifixion.

The Chronology of Passion Week. See page 173.

Wednesday, April 5.

No events recorded.

Thursday, April 6.

Return to Jerusalem and Preparation for the Passover Feast; the Feast Kept in the Upper Room in the Evening; Strife as to Who was Greatest; Washing of Disciples' Feet; Announcement of Betrayal; Probable Departure of Judas at this Point; Institution of the Lord's Supper; Prediction of Peter's Denial; Farewell Discourse and Intercessory Prayer; Departure at Midnight for Gethsemane.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

If you have not already put into practice the suggestions given on page 22 of our Introduction in regard to the training of pupils in service, this lesson should make you begin the good work.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Once the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" And he called to him a little child and placed him before them and said: "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." It was a hard lesson for the disciples to learn.

Some months later James and John came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we

would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee," and when Jesus asked what was their request they replied, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left hand, in thy glory." "Me first" was what each of them meant. When the other disciples heard how those two brothers wished to gain for themselves greater honor than should be given them, they were very indignant. Jesus then said: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." John learned the lesson at last, and when he wrote this Gospel that we are studying he did not care anything about being first, and never once spoke of himself by name.

On the last night of Jesus' life the disciples were with him in an upper room at Jerusalem. The disciples had been disputing again as to which of them was the greatest one, and our lesson tells us how he showed them that one who is truly great is truly humble.

For Older Pupils. What is true humility? Do we not wrongly associate this virtue more with outward demeanor than with inward grace? What is self-respect? Can one possess both a spirit of self-respect and of humility? Is humility to be coveted? How may humility be attained? Is the humble man a successful man? Let us keep in mind our answers to these questions, and see whether we shall need to change any of them after studying Christ's lesson on this subject.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE

When We are Like Our King. We are kingliest in character when we are Christliest in spirit and action. We are most like the King when we are helping others. Our true motto, in our relation to our fellows is: "I am among you as one that serveth." Towel and basin, bended knee and comforted pilgrim-feet and refreshed spirit—this is our family crest. We are reaching highest when we are stooping lowest to help some one up. We're nearest like God in character when we're getting nearest in touch to those needing help. We are kingliest and Godliest and Christliest when we're controlled by men's needs, but always under the higher control of the Holy Spirit.—Condensed from "Quiet Talks on John's Gospel," by S. D. Gordon.

To Follow the Example of Christ is to Fulfill the Law of Our Human Being. Dan Crawford was reading to a native African these words one day: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." The native paraphrased the words thus: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he is going to do something for somebody else." Mr. Crawford thinks his words give splendidly the content of Christianity. Certainly we cannot follow Christ's example without constantly doing something for somebody else.

A writer in a recent paper proves that to follow Christ's example is but to fulfill the law of one's nature. Here are his words:

"There is one thing that every human being seeks. There is something for which the heart of mankind cries out. We are all, at some time, conscious of the need that we fulfill the law of our being. Imagine a man born with a native capacity for music amounting to genius, who yet never made music nor even heard it. Imagine a man whom God Almighty meant to be greatest among the world's artists, who was compelled by circumstances to be the driver of an ash cart. We can dimly picture to ourselves the tragedy of such a soul, to which life had denied the chance of fulfilling the law of its nature.

"But we all of us suffer in something like the same way. There is one fundamental law of all human nature. Human nature is Divine nature, for we are made in God's image, after his likeness. His nature is our inheritance, and God is Love. Our human nature, like the soul of the thwarted musician or artist, cries out constantly the need it feels to express its love and unselfishness. Born as we are, of God, unselfishness must find expression in our lives—or we must be miserable. We can no more be happy and selfish than a musician could be happy without the power of musical expression. Sometimes, "urged by a restless longing, the hunger and thirst of the spirit," we become conscious that our souls are hungry and needy. And how do we try to satisfy that hunger? Too often by being still more selfish! By trying to

get and hold more of the good things of life for ourselves! The tragic absurdity of it!

"In one of his books Dr. Grenfell wonders how any man can ever feel that life is not one glorious privilege after another; he marvels that anyone can become a pessimist in such a world! And what is the life that this enthusiast lives, what is the life that he finds so wonderful? Is it passed amidst culture, and art, and wealth, and leisure, and comfort, and luxury? On the contrary, it is on the barren, bleak, lonely coast of Labrador, where he ministers to the bodies and souls of a few poor fishermen. There he gives himself wholly to the needs of others. He has fulfilled the law of his being. We all are born of God. Only to the degree that a man fulfills that law can he satisfy the need of his soul."

II THE TRUE GREATNESS

The Humbling Influence of the Life of Christ. Jesus was "meek and lowly in heart." He never felt it beneath him to perform the humble tasks. The lesson of humility is often taught by word as well as by example. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," was the lesson of his parables about the chief seats and about the Pharisee and the Publican. His entire life teaches the dignity of work, the worth of the lowly place, the importance of the humble task. James Smetham writes: "I never before saw, as I have since I tried to get into it more, the humbling influence of the life of Christ," and Dr. Watkinson comments: "Yes, at every page of that wonderful life we are impressed with the majesty of meekness, the nobleness of humbleness, the luminosity of simplicity, the sweetness of contentment."

"Big, But No Good." One day at a county fair, says a Companion contributor, I walked through the building where fruits and vegetables were displayed. The exhibition was unusually good, and I was surprised to find that a single county produced so many varieties of fruit and vegetables. What chiefly impressed me was the great size of many of the specimens. I admired the enormous pumpkins, squashes, apples, and potatoes that I saw. Finally, taking a huge potato in my hand, I said to the farmer who was in charge of the display, "That is a big fellow."

"Yes," he replied sententiously, "Big, but no good!" Then he showed me an apple of extraordinary size, and said, "The same is true of apples. That apple is large, but coarse. It is all right for anyone who never ate a really good apple, but those who know what apples are do not want it." Then, taking up an apple of ordinary size, he said, "There is a good apple. It is not very large, but it has a fine grain and an excellent flavor. It will keep a reasonably long time, and it becomes better with age."

I have thought very often of that farmer's words. They are true of more than potatoes and apples. That is the trouble with us all when we are self-centered, and think only of how big and how conspicuous we can make ourselves. A life must have a different spirit to show "fine grain," "excellent flavor," and to "become better with age."—Condensed from "The Youth's Companion."

Willing to be a Servant. When Robert Morrison was a missionary in China he wrote to the missionary society in England that he very greatly needed another missionary to help him. While the society was wondering who could be sent, a young man from the country, poorly clad and rough of manner, came and offered himself for the work. After meeting and talking the matter over with him, the members of the society requested him to withdraw while they came to a decision. They decided that he would never do to help Dr. Morrison, for he lacked sufficient education and culture. Finally they said to one of their number: "Dr. Phillips, you go out and tell the young man that the gentlemen do not think him fit to be a missionary, but that if he would like to go out as a *servant to the missionary*, we will send him."

Very reluctantly Dr. Phillips carried out his commission, and was greatly surprised and gratified when the young man calmly said: "Very well, sir: I will go as a servant. I am willing to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, or to do anything to help the cause of my heavenly Master." The young man went to China as a servant, but he soon became a missionary and a very great and famous one, Dr. Milne.

III THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ONE OF JOYOUS SERVICE

Be An Active Christian. To find work to do is really a Christian trait—to find something to do for those in need—not waiting to be called upon, but seeking out places and opportunities. This is a characteristic of success in men and women in any line of life, but especially is it so in the church. In a great church with many members, it is very easy to be lost, very easy to be overlooked, to get into the background and sink from society, unless one have the determination to be loyal to the church and its activities, to be loyal to Christ and keep all his commandments. Christ says unto all, "Watch." "Again I say unto you, watch." "Work for the night is coming." The church should be a help to those who desire to be a help to the Master. Find something to do for Christ in connection with the church. Only when you are in the active list can you derive the benefits which the church is intended to confer. A full, happy life as a Christian is a life of positive activity, where there is plenty to do. Oh, so much is left undone! No person need be without Christian work, and if he will but set himself about it he will not only serve the Lord in accordance with God's commandments, but find in himself a well of joy springing up into a fountain of everlasting life. Blessed it is to belong to the church, if one is an active member, living a loyal life every day, seeking out something to do for the church. That means that humanity, through the opportunities which the church furnishes, will be blessed.—Russell H. Conwell, in "How to Live the Christ Life."

The Minimum of Christian Service. Some one says that one of the great weaknesses in church people today is their tendency to rest in the minimum of Christian service. They do not ask, "How much can I do for Christ, and his kingdom?" They ask practically, though they do not put it in words, "What is the least I can do for him and satisfy my conscience?"

Anyone who has tried to get someone to do a little additional work that requires some sacrifice of ease and time, knows how hard it is to get the Christian to undertake it. The excuses are many and various, but the one that is often heard is, "I have as much as I can do now."

The great work of Christ has never been done by those who were hunting for the minimum of Christian service. Livingstone was not calculating on the least when he opened up Africa at the cost of his life. Paul must have overlooked this in his work at Ephesus, for he toiled day and night.

If we are to do real things for Christ, we must give him whole-hearted service, and when he gives us opportunity, cheerfully seize it and do what we can.—"The Augsburg Teacher."

Executive Righteousness. The church must be more of a laboratory even though that should involve its being a good deal less of an oratory. The only way to learn to live the right life, the Christian life, is to live that life, to do its deeds, to offer its service. That life is preeminently one of positive living, of activity of doing; training in that life will be active, positive, volitional, of the type of executive righteousness. Certainly a large part of any normal religious life lies in religious work, in service for the kingdom; and, usually, through the church as the social instrument for the kingdom. This rendering of service is a need of the man just as truly as the service is needed by the church. When one is asked to do any proper work for religion the proposition should be regarded, not in the light of a favor to be conferred by the worker, but rather an opportunity, a favor conferred by the church, or whatever organization it may be seeking your help, in permitting the development of powers by this means. The only people who do not believe in religious work are the people who do not try to do it. Every man will agree that all right and reasonable service for any religious organization has been worth more to him personally, in character development, than it has been to any person whom he has sought to benefit.—Dr. A. F. Cope, in "The Efficient Layman."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. Jesus came from God, not leaving him, and went to God, not leaving us.—Bernard.

Verse 4. All of us have hours of conscious elevation; how do we treat them? Do we strut—or do we serve? Do we parade, or do we turn our power to practical use?—Griffin W. Bull.

Verse 7. It is evident that in all things God counts upon the future and works for the long result.—Dr. John Kelman.

Verse 9. He who needs washing needs wringing.—Ruskin.

Verse 10. A daily cleansing I must have for daily sin; and daily grace is as needful to me as daily bread.—Dr. G. H. Knight.

Verse 14. Service is one of the ways by which a tiny insect like one of us can get a purchase on the whole universe; if he finds the job where he can be of use, he is hitched to the star of the world, and moves with it.—Richard C. Cabot.

Verse 15.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of him whose holy work was "doing good";
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude. —Whittier.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

On the last night of his earthly life Jesus thought of his coming death as a going unto God. So we should think of death in this same beautiful way.

"If you please, sir, are you anybody in particular?" some one timidly asked a college man who, with an air of great importance, was strutting along the campus in cap and gown. Ask yourself if you are anybody in particular that you should not stoop to serve. If you will compare yourself with what you ought to be, you will always be humble.

As an artist keeps bright-colored stones or other objects near so as to keep his sense of color from weakening, so you must keep Jesus' example ever before you that your ideal of righteousness may not weaken. Study his teachings, reflect upon his life, and strive to make yours, like his, a life of service.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Unselfish service a fundamental Christian law. "The day will come when it will be recognized that each one's debt to his fellow men is in proportion to the strength and intelligence he has received from God; and it will be a part worthy of genius to assert its legitimate empire, not by the amount of tribute it will levy on society, but by the greatness of the services that it will render." See our Introduction, page 23, with its references to books; also "Whither?" in "The Outlook," Dec. 15, 1915.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What words of Christ does John record between our last lesson and this? 2. To whom were these words spoken? 3. Describe the vine of Palestine. (*Guide*, page 190.) 4. How did Jeremiah use the metaphor of the vine? (Jer. 2.21.) 5. What figure does Paul use which corresponds to this of the vine and its branches? (Rom. 12.5; 1 Cor. 10.17.) 6. What is the fruit of the vine according to Gal. 5.22, 23?

Questions to Think About. 1. Does Jesus mean that he is the vine-stock, the main stem of the vine? (*Guide*, page 189.) 2. Why do gardeners prune grape vines? 3. What does the second verse mean? 4. Why does Jesus add "and my words abide in you" after saying "if ye abide in me"? (*Guide*, p. 189.) 5. What does it mean to "glorify the Father"? (*Guide*, p. 189.) 6. What words of our text express the absolute dependence of disciples upon Christ? 7. How could the disciples "abide" in Christ after his death? 8. What are the privileges of union with Christ? 9. What are the results of union with Christ? 10. Can one be *in Christ* and yet remain fruitless? 11. How does Jesus express the depth of his love? 12. How should a disciple prove his love? 13. To what extent will love go for its object? 14. How can one have this love for those whom he does not like? 15. What is the proof that one is a disciple of Christ?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the words about love in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Memorize the most beautiful words in John 14.

In your Note-Book write "XVII Jesus the Servant of All."

JESUS THE TRUE VINE

Golden Text

I am the vine, ye are the branches. John 15.5

LESSON John 15.1-16: verses 1-13 printed. MEMORIZE verses 7, 8

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples. 9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full. 12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Relation of the Disciples to the Master, 1-11.
 1. Christ the True Vine, 1.
 2. The Reason for the Pruning of the Branches and the Instrument of Pruning, 2-3.
 3. The Conditions of Fruitage and the Fate of the Fruitless, 4-6.
 4. The Blessings of Fruitage, 7-11.
- II. The Relation of the Disciples to One Another: Love like Christ's, 12-13.

1. *I am the true vine.* The perfect vine. This metaphor may have been suggested by the fruit of the vine which had just been used and consecrated at the Last Supper, by the sight of the golden vine over the gate of the Temple shining in the moonlight, by the many vines on the hillside, or by the odor of burning branches which the vine-dressers burned at that season of the year. Yet it was a well-known metaphor: Jeremiah writes of the Jews being a noble tree that had turned into degenerate branches, Jer. 2.21.—*The husbandman.* See Mk. 12.1; Lk. 13.6; Isa. 27.2, 3.

2. *Every branch.* Ye are the branches, verse 5.—*He taketh it away.* At the Last Judgment.—*Cleanseth.* Pruneth, through the discipline of troubles and sorrows.

3. *Ye are clean.* Ready to bear fruit.

4. *Abide in me and I in you.* "To abide" occurs some sixteen times in John's Gospel. The true followers of Christ must be one with Christ. "We are called by the Lord to an inconceivable intimacy. We are not to be as vagrants who sleep upon a new doorstep every night, and who only occasionally return to our old resting-place. We are not even to be visitors of the Lord, turning aside now and again for a brief sojourn, and then away into forgetfulness again. 'She had the Lord on her visiting list!' No, not that! We are to settle down with the Lord, to rest in him, to abide in him, to make him our eternal dwelling—

place. We are to be at home in the Lord " (Jowett).—*The word which I have spoken unto you.* My teachings.

5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches.* I am the source of your life. This figure corresponds to that of the body and its members: Mt. 26.26; Rom. 12.5; 1 Cor. 10.17. Note that Jesus does not say he is the vine-stock, the main stem of the vine, but that he is the vine, the whole plant—root, stem, branches, leaves, fruit. The disciples are the branches, they are a part of the vine, and thus by this figure, Jesus wonderfully expresses the mysterious oneness, the vital relationship between himself and his followers.—*Apart from me ye can do nothing.* "Abiding in Christ is not a question of a little more, or little better fruit; for 'without me,' or 'apart from me,' ye can do, not little, but 'nothing.' The question is of much fruit, or of none at all." (J. Hudson Taylor). "Ye can no more produce a virtue without the vine than can a barbed wire fence grow luscious grapes. All the vigor, verdure, luxuriance, graces, goodness that we possess have come to us because the life of Christ has been flowing through his followers" (Griffin W. Bull).

6. *Cast forth as a branch.* As a useless branch.—*They gather them and cast them into the fire.* Branches that had been cut off were burned in the vineyards where they grew.

7. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you.* These are the conditions: prayers will be granted which are in harmony with God's will, and only those who are abiding in Christ, who are one with Christ, in whom Christ's words abide and are obeyed, can pray in accordance with his will. "That first relation—the abiding of the soul in Christ—if it were perfect, would be enough. An entire sympathy between you and the Lord would make it impossible for you to do anything but just what was the Lord's will. But that first relation is very imperfect and unreliable here. Therefore God must give him not merely his own Spirit but his own words. The soul's abiding in Jesus will make him ready to accept Jesus' words, and then the words will come to lead the soul into a deeper and deeper abiding-place in its Savior. The Bible is a temporary expedient; the oneness of the soul with God is an essential and eternal necessity. In Heaven we shall need no Bibles. Here we are to keep Christ's words as test-words to try our lives by, and see how deeply we abide in them" (Phillips Brooks).—*Ask whatsoever ye will.* Jesus is talking about bearing fruit, and the connection seems to be that prayer is necessary for fruitage, is fruitage itself, that the branches will ask the life of the vine in order to bear fruit, the petitions being for the furtherance of God's Kingdom. "God leaves unanswered among earnest prayers only those which his own character and plans make it impossible for him to answer. And can the soul that tests every petition by the Bible pray any such prayers as these? Can he in whom this word of Christ abides—'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness'—go on clamoring with miserable mercenary prayers for houses and lands, for food and drink, as if they were the first things to seek?" (Phillips Brooks).

8. *Herein is my Father glorified.* To "glorify God" means to recognize and acknowledge his true character. The Father is the husbandman, verse 1: much fruit testifies to his skill and care.

9. *I also have loved you.* "Our Lord shows us what love means; what it will suffer; what it will do. Hitherto it had been much of an abstraction; in him it took shape, and we see its beauty" (Watkinson).

10. *If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love.* It is only through obedience that one abides in Christ.—*Even as I have kept my Father's commandments.* Compare Jn. 6.7; 17.23.

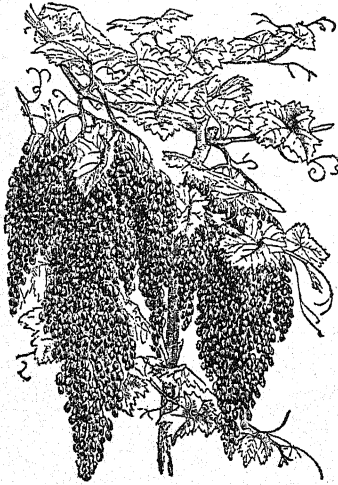
11. *That your joy may be made full.* "There is no mystery about happiness whatever. Put in the right ingredients, and it must come out. He that abideth in him will bring forth much fruit, bringing forth much fruit is happiness" (Henry Drummond).

12. *This is my commandment.* See Jn. 13.34. "Abiding in Christ is abiding in the love of Christ. Abiding in the love of Christ is abiding in the obedience of Christ. Duty, in other words, is the equivalent of discipleship. Duty conceived as the will of God and the command of Christ and faithfully fulfilled, evidences the inner union of the soul with Christ, as of branch with the vine. And the great duty which he pressed on his disciples was itself the duty of unselfish brotherly love" (Speer).

13. See Jn. 10.11; 1 Jn. 3.16.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The vine.* The culture of the vine has always been one of the leading industries of the Holy Land. Vineyards abound today on the hillsides, often where it is so rocky that one wonders how the roots ever found sufficient soil to grow, but they sink themselves very deep till they reach the moisture that drips over the surface of the mountain rock. The hillside is terraced, the retaining walls



A Vine in Palestine. "Bearing Much Fruit"

being built up of rough stones, and each terrace being only one to five yards in width. The vines are planted about twelve feet apart to allow the branches to spread, and are cut back and not allowed to bear fruit for three years. December and January are the months for pruning. The spreading branches are sometimes allowed to hang over the walls, but more often are raised from the ground by props. In large vineyards there is a wine-press and a booth for the watchman, whose gun and club drive off thieves and wild beasts.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who called Jesus the Lamb of God? What else did he add? When did Jesus call himself the Bread of Life? When did he call himself the Light of the World? When, the Resurrection and the Life? What did he mean when he called himself the Door of the sheep? What did he add after he called himself the Good Shepherd? By what action did he call himself the King? By what, the Servant? To whom did he say that he is the Christ?

What does Paul give as some of the attributes of love (a lesson of last year)?

Jesus' Last Discourse. Lovingly Jesus talked with his disciples after they had partaken of the Last Supper. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you; whither I go, ye cannot come." "Why not?" questioned Peter, and then with his usual assurance he added, "I will lay down my life for thee." "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me?" questioned Jesus. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." So much was yet to happen that night, and so swiftly did one event follow upon another, that when his faithfulness was put to the test Peter had already forgotten his Lord's astounding prophecy.

Now we may think of Jesus as uttering the marvelously beautiful and comforting words recorded by John in the fourteenth chapter. Every one must regret that we have no lesson from this chapter of John's Gospel. Read it all thoughtfully. If possible memorize it all. Under the shadow of death Jesus' thoughts were not of himself but all for his disciples. "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you. I come again and will receive you unto myself."

During the first part of Jesus' last discourse the disciples interrupted him with many questions and objections. "Lord," said Thomas, "we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me," was Jesus' answer. Then Philip made his request, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," and then when Jesus had answered this demand, Judas (not Iscariot) said, "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The disciples were mystified by Jesus' words and as they realized they could not understand him they were awed into silence at last, not daring, as Mark tells us, to ask him any further question. Then it was that Jesus gave them his beautiful allegory of the vine and the branches, to reveal to them the mystery of the vital, everlasting union between himself and them, to comfort and to strengthen them.

Chronology. See the last lesson.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Judas had left the inner circle. Only a short time before, Jesus had washed his disciples' feet in loving service, and yet Judas had gone forth to betray his Lord. The dastardly deed, which Jesus well knew would follow, did not obscure for Jesus the faithfulness of the remaining eleven. One was treacherous, but eleven were true. Turning to them, Jesus called them his friends. They deserved this tribute, than which nothing greater could be said.

• You may have one or two difficult pupils. Are you in danger of letting them dim for you the loyalty of the others? Do you allow your mind to be so engrossed with the troublesome ones that you fail to give the true ones their due?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Perhaps it was as Jesus and his disciples were about to leave that upper room in Jerusalem where he had been talking long and lovingly with them that he called their attention to a vine growing, and perhaps he said to them, "Do you see that vine?" "Yes," they answered. "Do you know that I am like that vine? Do you see those branches? Do you know that you must be like those branches? The branches are a part of the vine, and you must be a part of me. If you cut a branch off from the vine it will not live: if you drift away from me and my teaching, you can no longer bear fruit for me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches."

For Older Pupils. We have had many words by which Jesus has expressed his very Self, his Being, and his meaning to the world. What are some of them? What is the meaning he sought to convey by each metaphor? What does he call himself in this lesson?

There is a thought-arresting stained glass window in the Evangelical Church at Erbach, Germany. It represents the Crucified Savior, but the peculiarity is that the cross has taken root and become a vine, and beneath the extended arms of the Savior the mystic branches stretch down their bright green leaves and heavy clusters of grapes to the communicants below. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES

What Abiding in Christ Means. We should all understand what was meant if it were said of a young and dutiful child that he abode or lived in his parent. The child's earliest years are so completely hidden, behind the parent's life that you do not look upon him altogether as a separate individuality, but rather as almost a part of the same organism, one expression of the parent's nature; so that, just as the arm, the tongue, the eye, are several media for the expression of the parent's will, in the same way, though in a higher degree, the child is another limb of the parental life and utterance of the parental nature. The law owns this, and reaches the child only through the parent. We all expect children's opinions on matters of religion, of politics, of taste, to be echoes of their parents. The father acts and thinks for the child. The child acts and thinks in the father. Thus, until the time when the gradual departure takes place, the child's home is not merely in his father's house, but in his father's character—he abides in him.

Or take another case: the army and the common soldier "abide in" the general. The army does what its general does. As an army, it has no thought or action out of him. It moves when he moves, stops moving when he stops moving. We say the general has gone here and there, and we mean the army has gone. It lays aside all faculty of decision, or rather contributes it all to him, and he with the combined responsibility of the great multitude upon him goes his way, carrying their life in his. There is perhaps the most complete and absolute identification of two lives which it is possible to conceive of.

Now, we can get probably a better idea from these examples than we could from any careful definitions of what it is for a human soul to "abide in Christ." The child abides in the father; the soldier abides in the general. For the soul to abide in Christ, then, is for it to be to him what the child is to the father, what the soldier is to his captain. It is for it to give up its will to his as completely as the surrenders of will are made in the family and in the army. Nay, the "giving up of will" does not entirely express it, because

that implies something like reluctance and resistance. But the child has no will except the father's; and the soldier's will is so entirely at one with his captain's upon the great general purpose of the war, which is victory, that he rejoices to accept the captain's will in all details and make it his own. Christ is at once our Father and our Captain. Perfect affection and perfect loyalty combine to shape our attitude towards him, and the result of the two is that complete identification of our life with his life by which we "abide in him."—Phillips Brooks, in "The Battle of Life."

Detached Branches. I need the Lord. What can a branch do apart from the vine? It may retain a certain, momentary greenness, but death is advancing apace. And there are multitudes of professing Christians who are like detached branches; their spiritual life is ebbing away: they do not startle the beholder and cause him to exclaim, "How full of life!" They do not strike at all! They have no splendid "force of character," and they therefore exercise no arresting witness for the King. They are not "abiding" in the Eternal, and therefore there is no powerful pulse from the Infinite. "Apart from me ye can do nothing!"

And my Lord needs me. For the vine has need of the branch! The vine expresses itself in the branch, and comes to manifestation in leaf, and flower, and fruit. And my Lord would manifest himself in me, and cause my branch to be heavy with the glorious fruits of his grace. And if I deprive him of the branch, and deny him this means of expression, I am "limiting the Holy One of Israel." "My son, give me thine heart!"

Lord, help me to abide in thee! Save me from the follies of a fatal independence! Good Lord, "Abide in me."—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Where There Must be Unity among Christians of All Denominations. Of the heathen world it is asserted that five hundred million have never even heard the name of Christ. Commenting upon this, Lord Balfour said that there is no room for rivalry and for division in the presence of such a glorious opportunity. Have we yet to learn that the differences which divide those who name the name of Christ are not to be compared with the differences which divide the Christian from the non-Christian world? "May I say, soberly, respectfully, reverently, but earnestly, that there is but one Vine, and disunion in this matter means disloyalty. Christianity thus presented to non-Christian people is a religion of division, whereas it should be a religion uniting all the peoples of the earth. Unity, therefore, is necessary, not only for its economy and practical value, but because it was the ideal of our Master himself."

II MUCH FRUIT

The Result of the Vital Connection is Fruitage. Jesus expects an impulse to arise from within and set the whole life in motion, just as the sap forces the leaf and fruit forth into the world. He expects your connection with him to tell its story in terms of life. He expects his heart blood to go pulsing through you and make you act as the promptings of his heart caused him to act. A formal connection with a church without a vital connection with the Christ will bear no more fruit than a formal connection with the cement in the walls of the church. You may go through the spasmodic action of an occasional good thing and feel comfortable. Tying a bunch of grapes to a lamppost does not make a vineyard. Let Christ live in you and fruit must follow. Do not be a dead branch—be a blessing.—Dr. Griffin W. Bull, in "Daily Reminders from John's Gospel."

Fruitfulness through Discipline. Go into your hothouse, and see how the experienced hand brings the wild and wayward branch under control. At first it sways to and fro after its own wild will, but in doing so it misses the golden sunlight that awaits it on a certain unoccupied space of the viney wall. There, ultimately, it is fixed with a bit of cloth to bind and hold it fast, and a nail driven into the wall itself. The position is a constrained and painful one. The branch resists and threatens to expire in the anguish of its despair. It is as though it were crucified. But after a while, as the sap pours itself upward, attracted by the golden sunshine, it finds itself bearing much and abiding fruit.

Is not this a parable of life? The great husbandman desires fruit that may redound to his glory and abound unto our own account. But we are

strong and wayward. We gird ourselves and walk whither we will. Finally the hand of Love and Pity takes us in hand and fixes us to a cold barren piece of wall. The means he uses to effect his purpose are often very clumsy in appearance. We resent the iron of the nail and the coarse texture of the cloth. We go through the world rattling our chains and complaining. We lift our manacled hands, saying in a tone Paul never used, "Remember my bonds." But through it all Jesus is glorified and souls are won, and our fruit remains.—F. B. Meyer.

Fruitfulness through Kindness. People talk as if the blessed Master only got fruit out of us with a prunin' knife—always standin' over us, an' a-cuttin' here an' a-loppin' there. Why, bless his name, sunshine and showers, and the gentle south winds have a deal more to do with a bunch of grapes than prunin' knives have. The dear Lord a-standin' over us with all his kindness and care—why, he is trainin' the branches, and is watchin' over us, and his gentleness and lovin' care have a deal more to do with the fruit than the knife has.—Mark Guy Pearce.

III LOVE ONE ANOTHER

How Shall We Love One Another? Even as I have loved you, Christ answers. And how did he love us? By giving us the greatest of all love, by laying down his life for us. We, then, are to love one another up to the point of sacrifice. This was a new commandment, new in the depth of love required, new in the required manner of showing love. Love such as Christ enjoins is not mere feeling; it is feeling shown in action. Love that meets his demands must seek the welfare of another, must strive to attain that other's good even though the effort causes trouble or suffering.

Dr. M. D. Babcock's love for others was akin to Christ's. His usual words of greeting were, "What can I do for you?" and the words expressed the whole spirit of his life. His love always sought expression in service for others.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." A missionary on the Congo had tried to win an old negro king by gifts and many attentions, but could make no impression upon him. Then came a famine, and the missionary found a poor slave who had been left by his owner to starve. His love for others was true enough to lead him to take that slave to his home, feed and care for him, nurse him through a long illness, and when he died to bury him with every mark of respect and honor. Then the king said to his people: "This man nursed old Tempe, and helped him, and when he died buried him as if he had been his uncle, in a lot of good clothes, and fenced in his grave. There is something in it all that is wonderful. I cannot understand it."

Friendship Modeled After That of Our Great Friend. Our common friendship for Christ should cement and sanctify all the relations of life. I should rejoice in my friend's success and not have a wave of jealousy sweep over my soul on account of his prosperity. My friend should be able to trust me with the secret of his heart without the fear of having it blazed from the housetop. I should share my friend's sorrows until he feels that they are my own. I should serve my friend who is helpless until he can stand upon his feet—and then keep my arms around him lest he fall again. With such friendship as this there would be a delight and a dignity added to living which would lift us far above the low levels upon which we now live.—Dr. Griffin W. Bull.

Love the Key of Life. There is only one key to the whole of life, a key fitted to man's hand. The key is here for those who can see clearly enough to insert it and are strong enough to press it home. The key to life is Love, Love not according to the best definition, but according to the best exhibition. It is easy to quibble about the contents of Love so as to denature it. But one thing is sure—the proportion of austerity and gentleness, of discipline and beneficence, is not likely to be lost to one who takes the Gospels as his constant companion. Jesus Christ as there portrayed is the normal, and therefore the pattern, Man. The most daring, the most stupendous, the simplest thing a Christian can do is this common duty. It is to take Love for his sole inspiration and master, not in spots or at times, but everywhere, always Godward, manward.

In all human relations God intends his royal law of love to reign, whether in education, in business, in the administration of justice, or in diplomacy.

Had he desired separate principles and laws for the several departments of life, he would have made them clear. Instead, he declared in the fact of Love-made Flesh and in his acts during his sojourn with us, that Love thus exhibited is the supreme test and covers the whole field. It is a far cry to the Ideal for even those who are most advanced in the understanding and practice of love. But the Ideal stands fast to beckon and encourage us. Sometime—soon, perhaps—a century will be born which will be distinguished by the fact that the love of the men who occupy its years is very like the Love wherewith Christ first loved us. It will be the greatest of all centuries when it comes, and its men will be the greatest men.—Condensed from an article by Bishop Charles H. Brent.

It is More Blessed to Love than to Be Loved. "They are the dearest folk that I ever had the privilege of loving!" exclaimed an enthusiastic girl, referring to some friends and favors. It is a high privilege to gain love and to enjoy it, but it is a higher one to give love. To be an embodied "Thirteenth of Corinthians" means perpetual giving out, and the giving is still "more blessed."

Love gained, beautiful and beneficent as it is, may possibly make us selfish, but love outpoured, in opulence and abandon, is in its nature self-forgetful. Love clarifies and enriches the whole being in its outgo, and what an education it is in its "drawing-out!" It begs for no equivalent, and thus is slain the commercial spirit of barter. Let us use the privilege, the preeminent privilege, of loving. Let us "love our own with usury while we have them near," as Charles Wagner admonishes. The interest upon this investment always goes to the investor of capital, and may be laid up to store upon in days of separation, a reserve under guard of happy memory. Privilege is more than permission, and entails larger responsibility. Are we living up to our privilege? Let us love many and love much. We cannot wholly govern our gaining of love, but we have everything to do with our giving.—Julia H. Johnston, in "The Interior."

Love Very Unlike Christ's. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

How far short the generality of love falls of these words of Paul to the Corinthians, and of Christ's words in our lesson text, Laura E. Richards has cleverly shown in this little fable:

A child quarreled with his brother one day about a cooky. "It is my cooky!" said the child.

"No, it's mine!" said his brother.

"You shall not have it!" said the child. "Give it to me this minute!" and he fell upon his brother and beat him.

Just then came by an Angel who knew the child. "Who is this that you are beating?" asked the Angel.

"It is my brother!" said the child.

"No, but truly!" said the Angel, "who is it?"

"It is my brother, I tell you!" said the child.

"O no!" said the Angel. "That cannot be, and it seems a pity for you to tell an untruth, because that makes spots on your soul. If it was your brother, you would not beat him!"

"But he has my cooky!" said the child.

"Oh!" said the Angel, "Now I see my mistake. You mean that the cooky is your brother; and that seems a pity, too, for it does not look like a very good cooky, and besides, it is all crumbled to pieces."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 4. There are some people who *visit* Christ: there are others who *abide in him*.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Verse 4. We dwell in him since we are his members: he dwells in us since we are his temple.—Augustine.

Verse 5. The busiest life apart from Jesus amounts to zero, and a cipher expresses its value.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 5. Fruit depends on life; oh yes; but continued life depends on fruit.—G. Campbell Morgan.

Verse 6. No pride of self thy service hath,
No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness, death
Our life, apart from thine.

—Whittier.

Verse 11. Real joy comes not from ease, not from riches, not from the applause of men, but from having done things that were worth while: that was Christ's joy.—Dr. W. T. Grenfell.

Verse 14. And thou hast said, "My friend
Is he who keeps my word."
This I can do e'en to the end;
I can be faithful, Lord.

—Maltbie Davenport Babcock.

Verse 14. We show our friendship by seeking his fellowship.—Griffin W. Bull.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Here is a thought from the sermon of a Zulu which he might have written for us: "I have noticed a little plant which drops its roots when it has reached a certain size and fastens itself on a great tree near it. We, too, should abandon our own roots, set as they are in evil ground, and attach ourselves to the Great Tree, Christ Jesus."

I belong to him—that sense of relationship ought to make a Christian as different from ordinary men as a prince is different from a peasant, for it puts him at once into the rank of nobility, and makes it incumbent upon him to live as a son, not as a hired servant.—Rufus M. Jones.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. A life of fruitfulness is what our Father expects from us. A life of fruitfulness glorifies the Father and should be the goal of life. "God wants Christ so formed in me that Christ and I are one, and that the image of his Son may be manifest in my thoughts and heart and life."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The source of religious efficiency. See the First Topic.
2. Verse 7: the conclusion must not be taken without the premise.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. To what period does this prophecy of Isaiah belong? 2. Read Isaiah's denunciation of intemperance in Isa. 5:11-23. 3. Read his description of an Assyrian invasion as a destructive flood, Isa. 8:5-8. 4. Describe the situation of Samaria. (*Guide*, p. 198.) 5. With verse 10 compare Heb. 5:12-14. 6. When and by whom was Samaria conquered? (*Guide*, p. 197.) 7. What is said about wine in Prob. 20:1? 8. What progress in temperance has been made during the last few years?

Questions to Think About. 1. What was "the crown of pride of Ephraim"? (*Guide*, p. 196.) 2. Who is "the mighty and strong one," verse 2? (*Guide*, p. 196.) 3. Explain the figure of speech in verse 2. (*Guide*, p. 197.) 4. Explain the figure of speech in verse 4. (*Guide*, p. 197.) 5. What is the force of verses 5 and 6? (*Guide*, p. 197.) 6. Who are "these," verse 7? (*Guide*, p. 197.) 7. Who uttered the words of verses 9 and 10? (*Guide*, p. 197.) 8. What do they mean? (*Guide*, p. 197.) 9. Who uttered the words of verses 11-13? (*Guide*, p. 197.) 10. What do they mean? (*Guide*, p. 198.) 11. To whom did Paul write the words of our Golden Text and what do they mean? 12. What are some of the evils wrought by strong drink? 13. At what other vices is our Golden Text aimed? 14. What are some of the evils attributable to smoking? (*Guide*, p. 202.) 15. What are some of the means of lessening intemperance? 16. Why is it helpful to sign a pledge? 17. Was that young man right who told his father that if saloons were good enough for the latter to vote for, they were good enough for him to support by buying drinks?

Note-Book Work. Write "XVIII Jesus the True Vine."

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONTROL (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Golden Text

Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. 1 Corinthians, 9:25

LESSON Isaiah 28.1-13 MEMORIZE verse 7

1 Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one; as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing, will he cast down to the earth with the hand. 3 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot; 4 and the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the first-ripe fig before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up. 5 In that day will Jehovah of hosts become a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people; 6 and a spirit of justice to him that sitteth in judgment, and strength to them that turn back the battle at the gate.

7 And even these reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, *so that there is no place clean.*

9 Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts? 10 For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.

11 Nay, but by *men* of strange lips and with another tongue will he speak to this people; 12 to whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. 13 Therefore shall the word of Jehovah be unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Drunkards of Ephraim, 1-6.
 1. Speedy Fall of Samaria Predicted, 1-4.
 2. A Promise to the Faithful Few, 5-6.
- II. The Drunkards of Judah, 7-13.
 1. The Scene at a Feast, 7-8.
 2. The Words of the Drunken Revelers, 9-10.
 3. The Words of Isaiah, 11-13.

1. *Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim.* The city of Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, is "the crown of pride" of its inhabitants, the drunkards of Ephraim. Isaiah pictures the city as a drunken reveler whose head is garlanded with a wreath of quickly fading flowers.—*Which is on the head of the fat valley.* Samaria has a commanding situation, crowning a hill in the center of a fertile valley, its own slopes terraced with vineyards and gardens.—*Overcome.* Or, *smitten down*, RVM.

2. *The Lord hath a mighty and strong arm.* Assyria, who is to be the agent of the Lord in chastizing the Ephraimites. Compare Isa. 10.5-6: "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation! I will send him against a profane nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread

them down like the mire in the streets."—*As a tempest . . . overflowing.* So also in Isa. 8.7, 8; 17.12. The prophet compares an invasion to storm and flood.—*With the hand.* Or, *with violence*, RVm.

4. *The fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley.* See verse 1—*Shall be as the first-ripe fig before the summer*—The fig which ripens before the fruit-harvest in August. That such figs were highly prized is seen from Jer. 24.2; Hos. 9.10.—*Which when he that looketh upon it . . . eateth it up.* "Now if any one sees a fig as early as June, he fixes his eyes upon it, and hardly touches it with his hand before he swallows it, and that without waiting to masticate it long. Like such a dainty bit will the luxuriant Samaria vanish. The fact that Shalmaneser, or his successor Sargon, did not conquer Samaria till after the lapse of three years (2 K. 18.10) does not detract from the truth of the prophecy; it is enough that both the thirst of the conqueror and the utter destruction of Samaria answered to it" (Delitzsch).

5. *In that day.* When Samaria's fortress, the crown of pride, is cast down to the earth.—*Will Jehovah of hosts become a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of the people.* A promise that Jehovah will be the stay of those who remain faithful.

6. *A spirit of justice to him that sitteth in judgment.* Jehovah will inspire in that one the spirit of justice.—*Strength to them that turn back the battle at the gate.* Or, *to the gate*, RVm. The enemy will enter the city, but the inhabitants, strengthened by Jehovah, will drive them back out through the city gates.

7. *And even these.* Isaiah now turns to the leaders of Judah (as verse 14 shows) and denounces them for the same vices as controlled the Ephraimites.—*They are swallowed up of wine.* "No man begins at the point of being swallowed up in any evil; he approaches it almost stealthily, he touches it experimentally, he retains for a certain time his self-control in relation to it,—he will handle it, but easily, so that he can set it down again, should it so please him. But at the end there is the swallowing up, destruction—death is in the cup" (Joseph Parker).—*The priest and the prophet . . . err in vision, they stumble in judgment.* The leaders of Judah are intoxicated even during their prophetic visions, and when passing judicial sentences. Compare Micah's charge against them in Micah 3, and the law in Lev. 10.9.

8. *All tables are full of vomit and filthiness.* "All the tables of the carousal. The prophet paints from nature here without idealizing. He reviews their conduct as it were in a mirror, and then in the severest terms holds up this before them, adults though they were" (Delitzsch).

9-13. Isaiah has evidently surprised the drunken revelers at their feast, and these verses are a dialogue between them and him.

9. *Whom will he teach knowledge?* These are the sneering words of the revelers, the drunken priests and prophets of Judah: does Isaiah think they are little children to whom he must impart knowledge?—*The message.* Or, *report*, RVm. The message which Isaiah as prophet has received from the Lord.

10. *It is precept upon precept, line upon line.* Many commentators deem these words, which in Hebrew are rhyming monosyllables, to be the babbling language of the drunken scoffers. Others hold the interpretation thus expressed by "The New Century Bible Commentary": "The original *tsaw laizaw, tsaw laizaw, kaw lakaw, kaw lakaw* is a mocking conformation of Isaiah's message to a nurse's child-prattle. We might attempt to reproduce it by 'Law on law, law on law; saw on saw, saw on saw; (saw instead of saying, for the sake of rhyme) a bittie here and a bittie there.' We see no mimicry of a drunkard's stammering here. The words are purposely abbreviated and reduced to rhyme in the Hebrew. The priests attempt to convey the impression of stale and wearisome iteration in the prophet's message."

11. *Nay, but by men of strange lips and with another tongue will he speak.* The prophet now "makes use of their own sarcasm" and tells them that the Lord will speak to them in the tongue of a foreign conqueror, that of the Assyrians, whose language was to the Judeans a strange, stammering one. "The Assyrian language, although closely allied to the Hebrew, was sufficiently different from it both in grammar and in vocabulary to seem a 'stammering' or 'barbarous' tongue to Isaiah's contemporaries. The com-

mon diplomatic and commercial language of Syria and Assyria was Aramaic" (Cheyne). "God speaks twice to men, first in words, and then by deeds, but both times very simply and plainly. And if men deride and abuse the simplicity of the former, if they ignore moral and religious truths because they are elementary, and rebel against the quiet reiteration of simple voices, with which God sees it best to conduct their education, then they will be stunned by the commonplace pertinacity with which the effects of their insolence work themselves out in life" (George Adam Smith).

12. *This is the rest.* "The line of policy advocated by the prophet, viz., faith in the Lord, abandonment of a warlike attitude, and detachment from all foreign alliances, Isa. 30.15, is what will conduce to national security and tranquillity" (Wade). "Isaiah practically grants the monotony, or rather the uniformity, of his preaching. But there was but one remedy for the evils of the time. 'Through returning and rest shall ye be saved,' 30.15. It was the 'rest,' not of passive obedience to Assyria, but of hearty faith in Jehovah, which is recommended. Compare Micah 2.10; Jer. 6.16" (Cheyne). —*Give ye rest to him that is weary.* "To the poorer classes upon whom the burdens of war fall heaviest."—*This is the refreshing.* The means of recovery.

13. *Therefore shall the word of Jehovah be unto them . . . line.* The word that is to be spoken through the attack of the Assyrians.—*And snared, and taken.* Like hunted animals.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *These reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink.* Total abstinence was a fundamental law of ancient Romanism, of Buddhism, and of Mohammedanism; it was the rule of life among the ancient Medes and among the ancient Persians; and it is very striking that among the Egyptian papyri there is one as old as 3600 B. C. on which we find among other moral aphorisms a warning against wineshops. "My son," it says, "do not linger in the wineshop; thou fallest on the ground, thy limbs become weak as those of a child."—F. W. Farrar.

10. *Precept upon precept, line upon line.* The Hebrew word translated *precept* signifies a *little precept*, such as is suited to the capacity of a little child. The *line* is the line which a mason stretches out to build a layer of stones by. (Compare 2 Kings 21.13.) After one layer or course is placed, he raises the line and builds another; thus the building is by degrees regularly completed. This is the method of teaching children, giving them such information as their narrow capacities can receive; and thus the prophet dealt with the Israelites.—Adam Clarke.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Our lesson for today breaks into our study of the Life of Christ as portrayed by John. It should not be studied historically at all, but solely as an excellent opportunity for a temperance talk. As to its historical setting, it is sufficient to know that the prophet Isaiah is directing the leaders of Jerusalem to turn their thoughts to the Northern Kingdom and see the impending doom of Samaria and is warning them that a like fate will befall them.

The time is the early years of Hezekiah's reign. During the reign of Ahaz Judah had quietly submitted to the Assyrian yoke; now, under Hezekiah, they are desirous of throwing it off with the help of Egypt. Isaiah warns them that this policy will not avail to save them: their only hope is in reliance upon Jehovah. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians under Sargon destroyed Samaria and took the people into captivity: in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem after a siege of three years.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The prophet Isaiah is speaking to the drunken leaders of Judah in their capital city of Jerusalem. In the first few verses he describes the drunkards of Ephraim, the leading tribe in the Northern Kingdom whose name sometimes stands for the whole kingdom. Their capital city was Samaria, located in a fruitful valley midway between the Jordan and the Sea. Its beautiful situation on the brow of an isolated hill, itself crowned by numerous towers, naturally suggested Isaiah's figure of a wreath of flowers.

Assign paragraph 146 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The revelers of Judah objected to the monotony of Isaiah's message, for they did not care to hear his warning even once, but they admitted that precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, is the right way to impress children. It is the right way to impress adults as well. There is power through repetition. A single announcement of any lesson thought will be quickly lost on the minds of intermediates and seniors and adults, as of primaries and juniors. Dr. Jowett is noted for the way in which he repeats a thought in his sermons. He takes a text or an idea, views it from every angle, turns it inside out, and when he is through with it you cannot help seeing it as he sees it, and you will not easily forget it.

"In planting corn, the proverb is, one grain for the crow, one grain for the worm, and one grain for the stalk," says Dr. Hillis. "And in teaching a child the principle is drilled into memory once to be forgotten; a second time to be neglected; a third time to be obeyed and transmitted into conduct and character."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. About seventy years ago a little girl was living in the backwoods of Wisconsin, roaming the woods and climbing trees. There was one particular seat in a tree which she called the "Eagle's Nest," and there she wrote stories and rhymes and hid them away where no one could find them. Sometimes she would wish she knew more about what was going on in the great world; often she would say to her brother and sister—"Do you suppose we shall ever go anywhere, or be anybody, or see anything?"

When she was eighteen years of age, her family moved to Evanston, Illinois, that she and her sister might go to college there. At thirty she had "become somebody," for she was then made dean of that college. But this place of honor she gave up to spend her time and strength for the temperance cause. For over twenty years she traveled throughout the United States and in foreign lands, lecturing and writing on temperance, and it was said that with the exception of Queen Victoria, she was the best known and best loved woman in the world. In the Hall of Statuary in the Capitol at Washington each State may place statues of two of its most famous citizens, and after the death of Frances Willard, the little girl who wondered if she "would ever go anywhere, be anybody or see anything," the State of Illinois voted to place her statue there.

Miss Willard felt that it was very important that the evils of intemperance should be understood by the children, that it should be taught them in precept upon precept, line upon line, and it was through her influence several years ago that the International Sunday School Lesson Committee, the committee which selects the lessons which we study each week, was led to give each year four lessons upon the subject of temperance.

Our second temperance lesson this year is from the prophet Isaiah, who lived before the time of Christ.

For Older Pupils. Coleridge once said that if he were a clergyman in Cornwall, he should preach fifty-two sermons a year against wreckers. As long as intemperance remains a great evil in our country, four lessons a year against this wrecker are perhaps none too many.

Dr. George Adam Smith says that the 28th chapter of the Book of Isaiah, from which our lesson is taken, is one of the greatest of Isaiah's prophecies. "It is distinguished by that regal versatility of style which placed its author at the head of Hebrew writers. The style mirrors life about ourselves. The truths are relevant to every day in which luxury and intemperance abound, in which there are eyes too fevered by sin to see beauty in simple purity, and minds so surfeited with knowledge or intoxicated with their own cleverness, that they call the maxims of moral reason commonplace and scorn religious instruction as food for babes."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I AN INDICTMENT OF DRUNKARDS

Isaiah's Strong Words. Of all indictments brought by moralists against nations, that which they reserve for drunkenness is, as here, the most heavily weighted. In ancient times there was scarcely a state in which prohibitive legislation of the most stringent kind was not attempted, and generally carried

out with a thoroughness more possible under despots than where, as with us, the slow consent of public opinion is necessary. A horror of strong drink has in every age possessed those who from their position as magistrates or prophets have been able to follow for any distance the drift of social life. Temperance reformers are often blamed for the strength of their language, but they may shelter themselves behind Isaiah. As he pictures it, the natural destruction caused by drink is complete. It is nothing less than the people's captivity, and we know what that meant to an Israelite.—George Adam Smith.



Pictured Truth. In the last Thanksgiving Day parade of the Salvation Army this huge red whiskey bottle walked along at the head of a ragged family. It produced a profound impression.

In England several figures in silhouette adorn a poster. Here is a copy of a portion of it. Underneath the German Scientist are printed the words: "Who discovered that alcohol is a life-destroyer. It lowers vitality, injures health, lessens efficiency. One out of every sixteen hospital patients in Munich dies of 'Beer-drinker's Heart.'" Beneath the silhouette of the Life-Insurance Man we read: "Who declares that moderate drinkers shorten life on an average from ten to thirteen years by their occasional highball, cock-tail, or glass of beer." The English Doctors say to the troops: "Alcohol slows the power to see signals, confuses prompt judgment, spoils accurate shooting. Become total abstainers." The Red Cross Nurse says: "Alcohol, by lowering resistance, nine times out of ten, makes it just so much harder for a patient to recover. Be careful, therefore, how you use it as a medicine."

<p>A G A I N S T</p>				
	<p>GERMAN SCIENTISTS who discovered that Alcohol is a Life-Destroyer It Lowers Vitality, Injures Health, Lessens Efficiency. One out of every 16 hospital patients in Munich dies of "Beer-Drinker's Heart." Hedl & Bock, Munich, 1900</p>	<p>LIFE INSURANCE MEN who declare that Moderate Drinkers Shorten life on an average from 10 to 13 years by their occasional Highball, Cock-tail or Glass of Beer. Whitman, New York, 1900, p. 108</p>	<p>English Doctors who say to the Troops Alcohol—Slows the Power to See Signals Confuses Prompt Judgment Spoils Accurate Shooting Become Total Abstainers Antiquated Edition of British Publications</p>	<p>THE RED CROSS NURSE who says to you "Alcohol, by lowering resistance, nine times out of ten, makes it just so much harder for the patient to recover. Be careful, therefore, how you use it as a medicine."</p>

Being a "Good Fellow." Some years ago one of the popular illustrators drew for a magazine a picture entitled, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." It showed a clubroom; good-looking young men, whose faces were flushed with wine, stood, with lifted glasses, and sang their toast to one who stood at the head of the table. He was evidently greatly gratified. He looked as if he thought it supremely worth while to have his masculine friends, late in the evening, so demonstrative over his social qualities.

But there was another side to the picture. It showed the home of the "good fellow," where his young wife sat waiting for him. His house jacket was laid over a chair. His slippers stood ready before the fire. He had planned to spend the evening at home, and had not been strong enough to do it. Meanwhile the young wife had waited, watching the big clock count the hours. Now it was past midnight. It was not the first time that it had happened, or the second; it would not be the last by any means.

It was not simply the disappointment, the loneliness that made the young

wife lay her head on the table, sobbing. She wept because she knew that she had married a weakling. She saw that it meant so much to him to be regarded as a "jolly good fellow" that he gave up other things infinitely greater. She had learned that his good fellowship had in it selfishness and weakness.

It is pleasant to be called a "good fellow," but it is a shameful thing if we gain it through another's needless suffering, or at the cost of our own self-respect and manhood!—"Youth's Companion."

II REMEDIAL MEASURES

Keep Out of Temptation. Dr. Wayland Hoyt had a friend who after a long fight with the drink habit had come off victor. One day this friend, to escape from a sudden rainstorm, took refuge in a nearby saloon. He sat down and began to read a newspaper. Then his newspaper lowered itself, seemingly of its own power, till he could see the row of decanters behind the bar, and the decanters seemed to say to him: "You're wet; you need what I hold. Just one drink of me will do you good." He thrust up his newspaper, and again it lowered itself. He threw down the paper and rushed out into the storm. "He was victor, but he was almost victim," says Dr. Hoyt. "It would have been far better if he had never entered that saloon, though it were raining pitchforks. Keep out of the place and way of temptation."

The Negative Measure. For many years prohibitionists have been trying to banish temptations to drink from men's pathway. What national prohibition has accomplished in Russia has spurred on the movement in other countries. A well-known American journalist, now with the Russian armies on the field, writes as follows: "One cannot buy even a glass of beer in any hotel or restaurant in Russia that I know of, and the effect is marvellous. In six months' experience I have not seen a single drunken officer or soldier. The savings-bank deposits have enormously increased, and labor is so much more efficient as to offset the enormous loss of revenue by the prohibition of vodka."

The Positive Measure. Positive measures are always of more value than negative ones. A world-wide revival of religion would accomplish what a world-wide prohibition of intoxicating liquors could not. Mr. Charles M. Alexander has told some striking experiences in the Y. M. C. A. work in the training camps during the great European war. A sergeant came one day to a Christian worker and said it had been impossible to keep discipline in two tents over which he had charge. The men would come in late—drunk, fighting, using filthy language—and were often sent to the guard room. One night, when the men were about to return, one man opened a little book, and by the light of a candle which he held in his hand, began to read it. Another man across the tent shouted, "What are you reading, old chap?" He replied: "I am reading a pocket Testament. I have joined what they call the Pocket Testament League, and I promised to carry this with me wherever I go and to read a chapter a day. I am reading my chapter." A silence fell on the tent. Another man called out, "Don't be stingy. Read us some out of it." The next night five men pulled out their Testaments and read their chapter, one after another, passing the candle round, while the others were quiet and orderly. Now, every one in the two tents has joined the League, and they are in every night on time, there is no filthy language, they are never drunk.

The Help Which Never Fails. The "Youth's Companion" gives a conversation about modern miracles, in which a miracle is defined as "a change due to supernatural power." The two men who discussed the subject started out one night to see such a miracle. They went to a part of the city in which one of them had never been before, and entered a little hall between two saloons. "What sort of a place have you got me into?" whispered Hardy to Clark, after looking over the men and women near him. "This must be a meeting of all the 'down and outs.'" "It is," replied his friend.

After the leader had given out a hymn and made a short prayer, a big man with a voice of thunder rose and spoke. For half an hour he poured forth a perfect torrent of appeal to that roomful of lost men and women. He begged, urged, commanded them to come to God. When he sat down, a score of men and women went forward, and the big man knelt and prayed for them in a voice so tender that Hardy found his face wet with tears. He and Clark went out on the street.

"Well," said Clark, "you have seen your miracle."

"I grant I have seen an interesting sight and heard a good temperance talk, but where is the miracle?"

"Nine months ago that man you heard was a professional gambler and thief. He has been in state prison six different times. He has spent a fortune in drink and vice. Today he is engaged in an honest trade. He has abandoned all his old habits, and every hour he can spare he labors to redeem lost men and women. He is a devout, prayerful man. I say he is a modern miracle, as great as any that Jesus Christ ever performed. Could anything except miraculous power make that man what he is tonight?"

Hardy was silent. Finally he said, "You are right. I shall never disbelieve in miracles again."

III SELF-CONTROL IN ALL THINGS

Our Golden Text. "Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things," wrote Paul to the Corinthians. Paul often took his figures from the athletic games. You recall his words: "Know ye not that they that run in a race win all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run that ye may attain"; "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"; "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." No individual wins in the world's great arena, nor, what is of vastly more importance, wins the prize of his high calling, who has not himself in control. Woe to one who does not control his appetite for drink or his desire for anything that can harm himself or others.

Any Excess is Vicious. "Over almost everything save our virtues there might be written the condemnation—too much," says Dr. David Swing. The girl who drinks from six to ten glasses of soda water every day, as one girl I know is doing, the boy who is exercising himself into uselessness for anything but athletics, the woman who reads all the murders and burglaries and other crimes she can find in several daily papers, the man who takes such great chances in business that it amounts practically to gambling, all these are preparing for themselves a time of retribution.

You have read the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," and recall the story about the Merchant and a Jinn. A Jinn is the name the Arabs give to a spirit which they say is usually invisible, but which has the power to become visible and assume many different shapes. The Merchant had stopped in the shade of a grove to eat his lunch of dates, and as he ate he threw away the stones. Soon a monstrous Jinn appeared to him, sword in hand, and cried out, "Rise up that I may kill thee, as thou hast killed my son." "I kill your son!" exclaimed the frightened Merchant, "I did not know him, and never saw him." "Did you not," demanded the Jinn, "take dates out of your portmanteau, and, as you ate them, throw the stones about on both sides?" "I cannot deny it," answered the Merchant. "At that time," the Jinn explained, "my son was passing by, and you threw one of the stones at his eye, which killed him; therefore I must kill you." There are many girls and boys who do not think they are doing anything especially wrong in taking the soda water or smoking the cigarette, and they may be as surprised as was this Merchant when they find out the result of their actions. They will find, however, that consequences are as unpitiful as this fabled Jinn.

Evil Effects of Tobacco. Among the properties of tobacco smoke are:

1. Free carbon. It is this that settles on the back part of the throat and the bronchial tubes, blackening and irritating them.
2. Ammonia. It is this that causes the dryness of the smoker's tongue and throat, which tempts so many to the use of alcoholic drinks.
3. Carbonic acid, to which are due the headache, lassitude and sleepiness that follow prolonged smoking.
4. Oil of tobacco. This contains three substances: a volatile one, which causes the disagreeable smell that so clings to the clothing of smokers; a bitter extract, to which is mainly due the nauseous taste of tobacco and its power as an emetic; and nicotine, a powerful poison which gives rise to the tremor, palpitation and paralysis that so often afflict excessive smokers.

All must acknowledge that tobacco is utterly useless to one in a normal state

of health; that nature seems to have sought to guard against its use by the intense depression and sickness which it almost invariably causes at first.

But what are its more serious constitutional effects? These differ with the age of the smoker. It is universally admitted that, prior to the full maturity of the system, the smallest amount of smoking is harmful, especially in its action upon the heart. In the case of adults, careful investigators do not find it to be injurious except when used in excess; but it must be remembered that its use, like that of opium and alcohol, always tends to excess. As a rule, the amount must be steadily increased to secure the effect for which it is used.—“Youth’s Companion.”

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 7. Some folks smile at the folly of youth in dragging a sled uphill for the fleeting pleasure of riding down on it; but that youth is a sage compared with the man who works hard all the week and then drinks up his wages on Saturday night.—Josh Billings.

Verse 10. Even after a shipwreck there are hosts who will seek the sea.—Seneca.

Verse 12. “Shutting the eyes to the danger signal does not clear the track.”

Verse 13. All that is human must retrograde if it does not advance.—Cardinal Gibbons.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Your first duty is toward your after-self. So live that your after-self—the man you ought to be—may in his time be possible and actual. Far away in the twenties, the thirties of the twentieth century, he is awaiting his turn. His body, his brain, his soul, are in your hands. He cannot help himself. What will you leave for him? Will it be a brain unspoiled by dissipation, a mind trained to think and act, a nervous system true as a dial in its response to the truth about you? Will you let him come, taking your place, gaining through your experiences, hallowed through your joys, building on them his own, or will you fling his hope away, decreeing wanton-like that the man you might have been shall never be?—David Starr Jordan.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Should pledges be offered boys and girls in the Sunday-school? “If a pledge had been offered me when I was a boy in Sabbath School I should have been spared those seven dreadful years,” said John B. Gough. See “Zion’s Herald,” July 24, 1912.

2. Are wine and beer harmful? See “The Beer and Wine Fallacy,” “Sunday School Times,” Oct. 30, 1915; “The Outlook,” July 14, 1915, p. 595; “McClure’s Magazine,” March, 1909.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What did Jesus tell the disciples immediately after using his figurative language about the Vine and the Branches? 2. What is the meaning of the word translated *Comforter*? (*Guide*, p. 204.) 3. What are the names used for the Holy Spirit in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John’s Gospel? 4. What things will the Comforter do? 5. To whom will the Father give the Holy Spirit? (Lk. 11.13.) 6. What counsel does Paul give the Thessalonians in regard to the Spirit? (1 Thess. 5.19.) 7. What does he tell the Galatians is the fruit of the Spirit? (Gal. 5.22, 23.) 8. How long did the disciples wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit? 9. What happened on the fulfilment of that promise?

Questions to Think About. 1. Would it have been better for the disciples if Jesus had left them in ignorance of the dark things that were to happen to them? 2. Did Jesus ever make discipleship appear an easy thing? 3. What does “from the beginning,” verse 27, mean? 4. Explain verse 9. (*Guide*, p. 205.) 5. Explain verse 10. (*Guide*, p. 205.) 6. Explain verse 11. (*Guide*, p. 205.) 7. Why could not the disciples then hear what Jesus had to tell, verse 12? (*Guide*, p. 205.) 8. Did it seem best to the disciples to have Jesus go away and leave them alone? 9. Why was it expedient? (*Guide*, p. 206.) 10. Who is the Holy Spirit? 11. What is his mission?

Memory Work. Memorize the text of the next lesson.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK (PENTECOST LESSON)

Golden Text

He shall teach you all things. John 14:26

LESSON John 15:26-16:14: verses 15:26, 27; 16:7-14 printed.

MEMORIZE verses 12, 13

15:26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: 27 and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

16:7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. 8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; 11 of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, *these* shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Comforter and the Disciples Witnesses to Christ, 15:26-27.
- II. False Religious Zeal and its Work, 16:1-4.
- III. Christ's Departure Expedient for the Disciples, 16:5-7.
- IV. What the Comforter Will Do, 16:8-14.

15:26. *The comforter.* Or, *Advocate*; or, *Helper*, RVm. See Jn. 14:16. The Greek verb from which the Greek word *παράκλητος*, *Paracletos*, Paraclete is derived means *to call to aid*; the noun, then, stands for one who is called to another's aid, whether to comfort (Comforter), to plead his cause, (Advocate), or to help in some other way (Helper). The word *Comforter* here means *Fortifier*, one who strengthens, upholds, rather than one who consoles.—*Whom I will send unto you from the Father.* See Jn. 14:17, 26, where it is the Father who sends the Spirit, and Jn. 5:19, where the Son does whatsoever the Father does.

15:27. *And ye also bear witness.* Or, *And bear ye also witness*, RVm.—*From the beginning.* The beginning of his public ministry.

16:1-6. See "The Historical Background."

16:7. *It is expedient for you that I go away.* It is for your advantage, for your best interests. How could it be best for them to lose the daily companionship of their Lord? "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." (1) the Holy Spirit is the continued life and presence of Christ himself. While his bodily Presence was with them, his humanity obscured in a measure his Divinity. When the Holy Spirit took his place, he revealed Christ to them, made plain all the spiritual truth of his teachings. They knew him better after he had left them. (2) While he was with them they were weak men, unable to walk alone. After he went away and left them as his witnesses to carry on his work, they became towers of strength, wonderful leaders of men, who continued all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. (3) By leaving the few Christ became the Companion of all. While he was on earth he was with a few men, in a small land: now he is with all, everywhere, at all times. He is the universal spiritual Presence.

16.8. *Will convict the world.* *Convict* is used in the sense of *convince*.—*In respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* Explanations follow in the succeeding verses. Note that it does not say "of judgment to come."

16.9. *Of sin, because they believe not on me.* The Spirit will convince men that it is sin not to believe on Christ. Compare Jn. 15, 22, 24.

16.10. *Of righteousness, because I go to the Father.* "The Holy Spirit will convince mankind that Christ is a sincere and righteous Teacher, and not, as they had thought, an impostor, as will be clearly demonstrated when the Father has raised him from the dead and set him at his right hand in heaven" (Dumelow).

16.11. *Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.* *Judgment* here means *condemnation*, and the *prince of this world is Satan*. "Did not sin in Caiaphas, in the rulers, in Pilate, in the soldiers, in the multitude, uncoil itself as if by an irresistible compulsion, and at last exhibit its whole terrible length? The prince of this world was unseen; but does conscience need much proof that he was there? We say sin was exposed on that day—'Judged,' said Christ; 'the prince of this world has been judged'; not punished, but exposed and condemned, judged as a prisoner in court is judged when he is found guilty and sentenced as a criminal, even before the hand of the law takes him from the bar" (Thomas E. Bartlett).

16.12. *Ye cannot bear them now.* Further experience was needed to prepare them. Compare 1 Cor. 3, 1, 2.

16.13. *He shall guide you into all the truth.* Into all the truth that it is necessary for them to know.

"He to his own a Comforter shall send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them, and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write
To guide them in all truth."
—Milton.

He shall not speak from himself. Jesus said the same thing of his own words, Jn. 5, 19, 30; 7, 16-18; 8, 26, 28; 14, 10. The Father is the source of the Son's words; The Father and Son, of the Spirit's. "The work of the Spirit is the unfolding of the significance of the work of the Son; the work of the Son was the manifesting the name of the Father" (Reith).

16.14. *He shall glorify me.* "The fulfilment of this promise is found in every action and word of the apostles. Under the Spirit's guidance they lived wholly for Christ; the dispensation of the Spirit was the Christian dispensation" (Dods). "Jesus felt that he had not exhausted the well of truth; he had simply opened it, cleared away obstacles, that men might drink therefrom. The few brief years of his incarnate ministry would wield an abiding influence upon his disciples, and would afford a body of historic truth which the other Paraclete would use for human enlightenment" (Grist).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.* "There is a proverb found in the Rabbinical books, 'Whoever sheds the blood of the impious does the same as if he had offered a sacrifice.' The history of religious persecution, from Saul of Tarsus to the present day, shows that the persecutor has very generally believed that by slaying the heretic he was appeasing God's wrath against the community and the church."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Where were Jesus and his disciples in our lesson two weeks ago? What had already happened that night? What time was it? By what figure had Jesus given them an emblem of his continuing presence with them? On what was this presence dependent? When did the Holy Spirit come with power upon the disciples (a lesson of last year)? Who was the first follower of Christ to suffer martyrdom? What great persecutor of the early Church thought he was doing God's will thereby?

Christ's Last Discourse Continued. By his beautiful illustration of the Vine and the Branches (our lesson two weeks ago), Jesus taught his disciples their need of continuing in spiritual union with him, that through him they might receive strength and bear much fruit. "Ye are my friends

if ye do the things which I command you," Jesus continued. He had chosen them to be his friends, he had made known to them his Father's words, that they might be fruitful in deeds.

Then Jesus warned the disciples that they were to suffer hatred and persecution, and told them they must remember that they were only sharing in his suffering because of their fellowship with him. The Jews had seen him and hated him, and in doing so they were seeing and hating the Father. When the Comforter, whom he would send, should come, he, the Son, would not be left without a witness, for the Holy Spirit and the disciples themselves would bear testimony to him.

Continuing his discourse, Jesus sought to prepare his disciples for the future with all its suffering, and to comfort them. He told them that they would be excommunicated and killed by those who so little knew the Father and the Son that they would think they were serving God in this way. He would gladly have remained silent about these things; and in the beginning, while he was with them, he had not made these things real to them, for then they leaned on him as do children on their parents, and could not rightly apprehend the coming trouble. Now, however, he is to leave them, and he warns them so that in the hour of their trial they may remember his prophecy and the knowledge may strengthen them in their loyalty to such an omniscient Lord.

Sorrow filled their hearts, and they were too saddened by the thought of separation from their Master, and depressed by the dark future disclosed to them, to ask him any question about his departure. Jesus remarked upon their silence, and added, that, strange as it might seem to them now, they should live to see that his going away was really a blessing, for in his stead he would send the Comforter. The withdrawal of the visible Christ, present among them, was necessary in order that his Spirit might dwell in them.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." Our apprehension of religious truth is progressive. Religious belief grows out of religious experience, and religious experience is never completed. The wisest saint is still in the making, he has not yet reached the point in his spiritual growth when he can understand all the things which Christ through the Spirit has to say to him. What of the little child, or of the adult who has just begun to heed Christ's words? When trying to explain religious truths, do not lose sight of these principles.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The sun itself is too bright for us to look at, but we like to feel the warmth of its beams. Even if we had our eyes shut we should know that the sun was shining, because we should feel its warmth. The sun is far away, millions of miles from the earth, but we feel its influence. Something comes from the sun to us which makes us warm; something comes from the sun to seeds and plants which draws them out of the earth and makes them bud and blossom. It is the influence of the sun.

If there were a sweet rose in a vase beside you, you would know that it was there, even if you shut your eyes. By its fragrance you may know and recognize it even with closed eyes. It is the influence of the rose.

There are many rivers which turn wheels, work mills, give the power for electric light, cleanse and refresh everything they touch. We do not see all the river at once, only a little bit of it. But we know that there is more of it than we can see, because of the work which it does. We know that the power to do all this work must come from somewhere, and just as the sunshine is a part of the sun itself, and as the fragrance is a part of the rose, so the flowing river which we see is a part of the great river which we do not see.

So the Holy Spirit is the influence of God. He comes from God and yet is one with God himself, as the sunshine is one with the sun, and the fragrance is one with the flower, and the flowing river is one with the great river.

When we see a boy or a girl with a heart full of love and generosity and unselfishness—so full that it flows over with kind words and deeds—when we see that strong, gentle influence leading him or her to do right, we know

that God's Holy Spirit—God's holy influence—is in the heart of that boy or girl. Though we cannot see or touch him, we can feel and recognize the Spirit's love and sweetness and power. And when we feel a desire to do the right, a wish to do a kind act, or to say a kind word, we may know that it is God's Holy Spirit in our heart which is prompting this. That is his work—the mission of the Holy Spirit—to send joy and love and goodness into every heart, and make it like the Heart of God. (Condensed from an article in "The Sunday School Chronicle," by Grace Winter.)

Our lesson tells us what Jesus said to his disciples about the Holy Spirit. He calls him the Comforter, and the Spirit of truth, and tells them that he comes from the Father. What does he say is his special mission?

For Older Pupils. "I have something to tell you that seems too utterly good to be believed, and yet keeps getting better all the way along," so Dr. S. D. Gordon tells us. "It is this: the Master has planned that your life journey shall be a personally conducted one on this ideal plan. The Master has thought into your life and made arrangements for all its needs. He has arranged with his best friend, who is an experienced traveler, to go with you and devote himself wholly to your instruction. Some of you, I fear, may smile, and think I am indulging in a fancy sketch—drawing on my imagination. And so I pray our Master to burn into our hearts that it is plain, matter-of-fact truth, for every-day life." In these words Dr. Gordon gives us the strengthening, enheartening thought which Jesus' words about the Holy Spirit gave to his disciples. What were the circumstances in which they were spoken?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It is the doctrine of the inter-working of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men. God knows what is the secret way in which mind reaches mind. I do not, you do not. I do not know why words on my tongue wake up thoughts corresponding to those words in you. I do not know how soul touches soul, how thought touches thought, or how feeling touches feeling; but I know it does. Now that which we see in the lower departments of life—that which exists between you and your friends and me and my friends—that I take, and by my imagination I lift it up into the divine Nature, and give it depth and scope and universality; and then I have some conception of the doctrine of God's Spirit poured upon the human soul.—Henry Ward Beecher.

Manifestations of God. There is one God, one only God, who reveals himself to us, and deals with us in three ways so different that we call him by three different names. When we think of God as the Maker and Maintainer of the universe, according to whose power all things have their being, we are thinking of him as the Father. When we think of God as manifesting himself to us in the history of the race of men, and especially and supremely in the life of Christ, we are thinking still of the same one God, but as the Son. When we think of God as revealing his will in our conscience, and thereby teaching us how to do better, and at the same time to attain the betterment which is thus revealed, we are thinking again of the same God, whom we called first Father and then Son, and whom we now call the Holy Spirit.—Dr. George Hodges, in "The Training of Children in Religion."

The Holy Spirit is the Effectively Present Deity. He is God continually in the midst of men and touching their daily lives. He is the God of perennial and daily inspiration, the Comforter to whom we look in the most pressing needs of comfort which fill our common life. He is the God of continual contact with mankind. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a continual protest against every constantly recurring tendency to separate God from the current world. A God who made the world and then left it to run its course under the tyranny of force and law; a God who redeemed the world eighteen centuries ago and left it to be blessed by or to miss the blessing of the redemption which he had provided—neither of these ideas of Deity can comprehend the truth of God the Holy Spirit. A present God, an everlasting God, an ever-pleading, ever-helping, ever-saving God—this is the God whom Christ told of and promised, the God who came in the miracle of Pentecost and is forever here.—Phillips Brooks.

One Alongside to Help. Here is a little girl standing on the curbstone downtown on Broadway in New York, with a bundle in her arms. She has been sent on an errand, and wants to get across the street. But the electric cars are whizzing past in both directions, and wagons, and carriages, and omnibuses, and horses jam the street from curb to curb, and she cannot get across. She stands there gripping her bundle, watching eagerly for a chance, and yet afraid to venture. But the jam seems endless, and she grows very tired, and by and by the corners of her mouth begin to twitch down suspiciously, and a big tear is just starting in each eye. Just then a big policeman steps up, one of the finest, six feet tall, and heavy and broad. He seems like a giant to her. He stoops down. Would you imagine he had such a gentle voice? "What's the matter?" "Can't—get—cross." And along she goes, past cars, under horses' heads, close up to big wheels. She is just as small as before, and just as weak. But though her eyes stay pretty big, the tears are gone, and there is an air of confidence, because this big, kind-hearted giant by her side is walking across the street as though he owned the whole place, and he is devoting his entire attention to her. That policeman is a comforter in the strict meaning of the word.

I will send another Comforter, one who will be right by your side to help, sympathetic, experienced, strong; and he will stay with you all the time. In the kitchen, the sick-room, with the children, when work piles up, when things jangle or threaten to, when the baby's cross, and the patching and sweeping and baking and all the rest of it seem endless, on the street, in the office, on the campus, in the store, when tempted—almost slipped, when opportunity opens for a quiet personal word, everywhere, every time, in every circumstance, one alongside to help. Is not that wonderful?—Condensed from "Quiet Talks on Power" by S. D. Gordon.

The White Comrade. Many curious stories of the supernatural come from the different battle fronts. Most of us have heard of the Angels of Mons, that celestial company that is said to have come suddenly to the rescue of a retreating English force. Less familiar is the White Comrade, of whom a letter in the "Church News" tells us:

"The wounded have been visited by a figure in white, whom they call the 'White Comrade.' A soldier who had scoffed at the story was wounded himself one day, and as he lay helpless, the White Comrade appeared and began to bind up his wounds. The soldier noticed something wrong with the White Comrade's hand, and said, 'You are wounded in the hand.'"

"'Yes,' replied the White Comrade, 'it is an old wound that has been reopened.'"

Today we have come to speak doubtingly of the supernatural; but we shall hardly find it in our hearts to grudge a wounded soldier, suffering and alone, the beautiful and comforting vision of the White Comrade. Moreover, whatever we think of the story itself, may it not lead us to ponder more deeply on the real White Comrade, the Comforter, the Christ within us, "the true light, which lighteth every man"? That Comrade, if we seek him earnestly, will come to us on every battlefield of life, will bind up more than our physical wounds, and lift our struggling lives up into an existence beautiful, joyous, filled with love and the desire to serve. The saints are those who have found the White Comrade and who have become filled with his spirit. Have they not been the wonder-workers, the conquerors, the happy people of the world?—"Youth's Companion."

II THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK

The Need of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you have watched an experiment by which the agency of the air in producing sound is proved. Inside a glass globe a silver bell is suspended by a spiral spring and set in motion, and the ringing of the bell is clearly heard. Then by means of an air-pump attached to the globe, the air is gradually withdrawn; the sound of the bell's ringing grows fainter and fainter; at last the air is exhausted, and though you can see the tongue of the bell striking against its sides, you can hear no sound whatever. Just as the air is necessary within the globe to produce the phenomenon of sound, so the presence of the Spirit of God within our hearts is necessary to convict us of sin, to teach and guide us.

He Shall Glorify Me: for He Shall Take of Mine, and Shall Declare It unto You. There is development in the apprehension of Christian truth.

Men do not in a flash take in the whole range of Christian teaching. They acquire it gradually under the guidance of the Spirit. Notice this growth illustrated in the case of the disciples themselves, and in the case of the Church at large by a comparison, say, of the Christian understanding of today with that of the second or third, or even of the sixteenth centuries.

The truth the Spirit reveals is already contained in Christ. It is the Spirit's function to unfold Christ to us. He does not reveal new truth. It is only new to us. It has all the while been in Christ. Our new view of the Kingdom of God, for instance, is not really new. It has been in Christ all along. It is only newly discovered by us through the illumination of the Spirit. This, then, becomes a test of every new truth that presents itself to us—is this in Christ? For he is the truth, and all the Spirit does is to take of him, and reveal it unto us.

The effect of the Spirit's revelation is the further glorifying of Christ. The Spirit's work will never issue in a belittling of Christ, but in a further exaltation of him. That again is a test of everything that purports to be the Spirit's work. Does it make us think more of Christ? We are not to believe every Spirit. We are to test the spirits. And the sure sign of the working of the Holy Spirit is that he exalts and glorifies Christ.—J. D. Jones, in "The Sunday School Chronicle."

He Shall Teach You All Things. There is a great difference between intellectual perception and spiritual perception. When you merely intellectually perceive the truth of the Scriptures, you put it like a book on a shelf in the library of your mind. But when the Spirit teaches you the Bible, you make it a part of your own spiritual constitution. That bread is the strength of your day. You go out fed and equipped, your life unified. That is the difference between pigeonholing and assimilating. In one case it becomes a part of a library that is on the shelf, and in the other it becomes a part of the working capital of your daily life. The Holy Spirit guides us into the knowledge of the Word of God.—Dr. John Douglas Adam.

Why the Spirit's Work is not always Evident among Christians. "After twenty centuries of Christianity's teaching peace on earth, most of the Christian nations of the world are now busily engaged in shooting down their fellow men! If that is all Christianity can do, I am through with it."

The older friend listened quietly to the young man's excited words and then said: "Christianity declares that at the heart of the universe is Love; that a Being of love surrounds us always, eternally seeking entrance to our lives that he may bless us and help us. All we need is to let him in, and however weak we are, we shall become strong; however despairing we are, we shall be filled with courage; however broken-hearted, we shall know the deepest joy. Tens of thousands of the most intelligent of every age since Christ bear united testimony that exactly that has been their experience. Will you be satisfied with a religion that does *less* than that? Can you ask a religion to do *more* than that?"

"Why haven't twenty centuries of that religion made this war impossible, then?" returned the young man.

"If your physician left you medicine for some illness, and as soon as the physician's back was turned, you pitched the medicine out of the window, and you steadily grew worse, could you justly say that the medicine had failed and you needed something different?"

The young man thought a moment and then acknowledged that we do not need a different religion, that all we need is to *live* the religion that we have.—Adapted.

III THE HOLY SPIRIT'S CO-WORKERS

He Shall Bear Witness of Me: and Ye Also Bear Witness. The Holy Spirit, whose coming was contingent on Christ's departure, should testify to men of his reality; and they in turn should transmit the testimony to the world. The strategic center of all the operations of the Spirit is within the infant Church. The ultimate objective is the making of Christ known to "the uttermost parts of the earth"—and that through the faithful witness of his disciples. Nor does the original fulfilment of this word by any means exhaust its significance, for it describes the twofold attitude of reception and reflection which must in all ages characterize the love of those who are

truly Christ's. They are to be continually themselves receiving the teaching of the Holy Spirit concerning Christ; and are to be as constantly proclaiming him to those among whom they are set as his witnesses. Their inner life and outward activity are thus to harmonize and to keep pace. The success of their service is proportioned to the reality of their sanctity, and their employment is contingent upon their endowment. Their preparation both of heart and message is to be the work of the Divine Spirit. But the responsibility both of attention and obedience is their own! Such are some of the precepts comprehended in this statement of Christ, to which we do well to take good heed.—J. Stuart Holden, in "The Pre-eminent Lord."

Those Who are Controlled by the Spirit are His Co-workers. Nothing more wonderful has resulted from wireless electric invention than the new boat invented by John Hays Hammond, Jr. An operator on shore is "able to control the speed and the direction of the boat by allowing wireless waves from the shore to act on a set of relays, receivers and motors on board, the motors controlling an engine and rudder on board. Generators control these motors and the shore station controls the generators. The distance so far attained is fifty miles, but is limited only by the radius of the vision of the man on shore." So the boat moves out into the deep sea controlled always by the will of the shore-man.

A boy once left home. He had all sorts of hard battles to fight against all sorts of discouragements and temptations. But all the while he remembered the home he came from and the good things he had learned. The wireless, tireless will and love of his mother directed him week after week and month after month. The receivers and motors of his heart and mind obeyed the long-distance shore call and at last he landed safe on the shores of good, clean, honorable manhood.

And yonder is a man who is way out on the ocean of life. But he is sailing right to the harbor because from way off there on the shore God is controlling his life. He is radio-controlled by the Master on the unseen shore! He will reach home at last!

Mr. Hammond's invention is very wonderful. But it is not so wonderful as our human hearts after all. The power and direction for all our lives are in God's hand. Controlled by his unseen power, we shall sail right. Let us do our part and keep our receivers and all apparatus on board in working order.

Let our souls be radio-centered! The voyage shall be safe then! And we can never sail out of God's sight.—George Lawrence Parker, in "The Congregationalist."

Are Our Souls Ablaze? It is said that upon the table-lands of Asia Minor the women may be seen at dawn of day going out-of-doors and looking up at their neighbors' chimneys. They would see the one out of which smoke is coming. Thither they go to borrow live coals with which to kindle a fire in their own homes. Do men watch thus our lives? If in our hearts the Holy Spirit has kindled the sacred fire, shall they not come to us for warmth and inspiration? How tragic if turning to us they find smokeless chimneys and nothing but dead ashes.—W. R. Lambreth in "Winning the World for Christ."

A Great Co-worker. When Stanley went to Africa in search of Livingstone he was not a Christian, but after he had met and lived with Livingstone, he bore this testimony:—"Here is a man who is manifestly sustained as well as guided from Heaven. The Holy Spirit dwells in him. God speaks through him. The heroism, the nobility, the pure and stainless enthusiasm at the root of his life come, beyond question, from Christ. There must, therefore, be a Christ; and it is worth while to have such a Helper and Redeemer as this Christ undoubtedly is, and as he here reveals himself in this wonderful disciple."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 26. Our Paraclete in Heaven is Jesus Christ; our Paraclete on earth is the Holy Spirit.—John Robson.

Verse 27. Man is not a freight car with his tonnage stencilled on his sides, but an immortal being with a carrying capacity great enough for anything that God sees fit to put upon him.—Griffin W. Bull.

Verse 7. As long as the great Leader lives the truth is caged: when the cage is destroyed the bird has liberty to fly out to carry its song everywhere.—Lyman Abbott.

Verse 7. We have no outside, distant, occasional Savior, as the disciples had long ago; but his spirit, his other self, to abide with us, in us, today, tomorrow, forever.—Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

Verse 7. God is for us—that is good; God is with us—that is better; God is in us—that is best.—Henry M. Booth.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

When you recite the Creed you say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit": what do you mean? Has the Holy Spirit a place in your Creed, but no place in your life? Truth is given us for life.

How may you obtain the gift of the Spirit? By asking your heavenly Father. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," promised Christ. If you believe in Christ, you must believe in this promise.

How may you know whether or not the Holy Spirit dwells in you and controls you? Paul answers in his letter to the Galatians: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." You need only place that cluster of the fruit of the Spirit beside the fruit borne by your life.

How may you have more and more of the Holy Spirit? Bishop Tomkins answers: "If a man recognizes the gift and opens it to his heart and life and obeys all the noble impulses of the Spirit, then the gift becomes richer and richer. And when he gives himself up wholly to God's ruling, then he is full of the Holy Spirit as was Stephen."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What the doctrine of the Holy Spirit means for Christian life of today. See "The Biblical Doctrine of the Holy Spirit" in "The Biblical World," April, 1909; S. D. Gordon's "Quiet Talks on Power."

2. The Holy Spirit is guiding the Church today through all the different controversies that arise. Illustrate by the gradual growth of the public conscience, as to slavery, intemperance, prison maladministration, child labor, conditions of laborers, etc.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read Christ's Farewell Prayer, John 17. 2. Describe the Mount of Olives. 3. Describe the oriental "garden." (*Guide* p. 213.) 4. Read the accounts given by the other Evangelists of the Agony in the Garden. (Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22.) 5. Read the account of the betrayal in all the Gospels. 6. What does John omit? 7. When before this had the officers of the Sanhedrin been sent to take Jesus, and why did their mission fail? (Jn. 7:32, 45-48.) 8. How did Jesus say he could have saved himself? (Mt. 26:53.) 9. Tell about Judas' interviews with the priests before and after the arrest. 10. What became of Judas? (Mt. 27:1-10.) 11. How did Peter show his penitence? (Lk. 22:62.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Jesus, "knowing all things," go to Gethsemane? 2. Why did the enemies of Jesus seek him at night rather than in the daytime? 3. Why did the priests want Jesus put to death? 4. What was Judas' motive in betraying his Lord? 5. Why did Peter deny his Lord? 6. While we cannot excuse Peter's sin, yet what circumstances help us to understand it? 7. Judas and Peter were both unfaithful to their Master: why was Judas' denial of his Lord so much worse than Peter's? 8. What was "the cup" which Jesus was ready to drink? 9. What does Jesus teach in his prayer about God's will? 10. How did Jesus show his care for his disciples?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Read Longfellow's "The Garden of Gethsemane" and "Aceldama," and commit to memory Longfellow's "The Sifting of Peter."

In your Note-Book write "XIX Jesus' Words about the Holy Spirit."

JESUS BETRAYED AND DENIED

Golden Text

He was despised, and rejected of men. Isaiah 53:3

LESSON John 18:1-18: verses 1-11, 15-17 printed MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples. 2 Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples. 3 Judas then, having received the band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When therefore he said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I told you that I am *he*; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one. 10 Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant's name was Malchus. 11 Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; 16 but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Two Groups on the Way to the Garden: the Betrayal, 1-3.
- II. Jesus Gives Himself Up, and Secures the Safety of His Disciples, 4-9.
- III. Peter's Rash Act, and Jesus' Rebuke, 10-11.
- IV. Jesus Bound and Led Before Annas, 12-13.
- V. Peter's First Denial, 15-18.
- VI. Jesus Questioned by Annas and Taken to Caiaphas, 19-24.
- VII. Peter's Second and Third Denial, 25-27.

1. When Jesus had spoken these words. His last discourse and prayer.—*He went forth.* From Jerusalem, or from the upper room.—*The brook.* Or, *ravine*: Greek, *winter-torrent*, RVm.—*Where was a garden.* The Garden of Gethsemane: see Mt. 26:36-46; Mk. 14:32-42; Lk. 22:39-46.

2. Who betrayed him. These words distinguish him from the other disciple named Judas. See Mt. 26:47-56; Mk. 14:43-52; Lk. 22:47-53.—*For Jesus oft-times resorted thither.* See Jn. 8:1; Lk. 21:37; 22:39.

3. The band. Or, *cohort*, RVm. A cohort was a tenth part of a legion, and in its full strength numbered six hundred men. This band of soldiers was doubtless a part of the Roman garrison of Antonia, the fortress at the northeast corner of the temple area. The priests had represented to Pilate that Jesus was a dangerous political agitator, and no doubt Pilate thought the companions of Jesus would withstand his seizure.—*And officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees.* The Levitical temple guard sent by the Sanhedrin. From Luke 22:52 we learn that some of the priests accompanied them.—*With lanterns and*

torches. It was full moon at the time of the Passover, but the soldiers were prepared for a cloudy night or for the possible attempt at hiding in the heavy shade of the garden.

4. *Went forth.* Probably out of the group of disciples. Note the voluntariness of his surrender to the death awaiting him. "When the people would have forced him to a crown, and offered to make him king of Galilee, he withdrew, and hid himself; but when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself: for he came to this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign" (Matthew Henry).

5. *Judas was standing with them.* His kiss of betrayal had been given earlier, Mt. 26.48-50; Mk. 14.44-46; Lk. 22.47, 48.

6. *They went backward, and fell to the ground.* Terrified by the wonderful majesty of Jesus. This incident is recorded only by John: Recall the purpose of his writing, Jn. 26.

8. *Let these go their way.* The disciples, too, were in danger of arrest and death, and Jesus, by willingly surrendering himself, secured for them a safe retreat. The other Evangelists record that the disciples forsook Jesus and fled, but John lets us know that Jesus made their flight possible.

9. *That the word might be fulfilled.* See Jn. 17.12. Read the other words spoken at this time: Mt. 26.55, 56; Mk. 14.48, 49; Lk. 22.52, 53.

10. *And cut off his right ear.* See Luke's account of the healing.

11. *The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* "The cup" is a well-known figure for some experience of life in relation to God: here it refers to God's plan for Jesus' death. Recall the agony and victory in the Garden, which John does not narrate: Mt. 26.39; Mk. 14.36; Lk. 22.42.

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent;
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content;
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame."

—Sidney Lanier.



Oriental Salutation

15. *Another disciple.* The unnamed disciple of Jn. 13.25, the apostle John.—*Was known unto the high priest.* John came from a comparatively influential family, and might well know Annas the high priest.—*Entered into the court.* The inner quadrangle, around which the palace was built. A stairway led from this court up to the hall or assembly room above, where Jesus was examined.

16. *Peter was standing at the door without.* A "porch," or passageway, led from the street through the front of the house to the inner court. Peter was standing at the "wicket" or door, the heavy, folding gate at the street entrance of the porch.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Where was a garden.* An oriental garden is a place of fruit-trees, shade trees, or shrubs, rather than of flowers or vegetables. Such gardens on the outskirts of town, although enclosed and recognized as private property, are yet entered freely by the townspeople without trespass, says Dr. Albert Long, and their cool shade is enjoyed as a pleasant retreat for quiet meditation or friendly conversation.

3. *With lanterns and torches.* In most oriental towns the local police regulations prohibit all persons from going about in the streets after one o'clock—that is, one hour after sunset—unless carrying a lighted lantern. Paper lanterns are sold in the streets, generally at the tobacco-shops, to those who have

been accidentally belated. Some of the lanterns in the better class of houses are very elaborate and ornamental, but those of the poorer class resemble the Chinese paper folding lanterns. For formal processions, especially when escorting some officer of the government upon an inspection or on a search for some hidden criminal, torches of combustible materials, which make a large blaze, are carried by soldiers, while the accompanying crowd carry lanterns.—Albert L. Long, in "Sunday School Times."

17. *He saith, I am not.* The reputation that Peter thus won for weakness and cowardice followed him, so that the tradition arose that during Nero's terrible persecution, when Christians were set on fire as torches in his gardens, and were put to brutal death in the Roman amphitheater, he fled in terror from Rome. A few miles from the city he had a vision of the Savior. *Domine, quo vadis*—Lord, whither goest Thou—he cried. With a look that vividly recalled to Peter the look he had received from his Savior in Pilate's Judgment Hall, Christ returned, "I go to Rome to be crucified the second time." It was enough. Peter turned back and witnessed boldly for Christ until he was himself crucified head downward for the sake of his Lord and Savior.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What ravine lay between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives? Where had Jesus been on Thursday evening of Passion Week? What did he say that evening that one of his disciples was about to do? What did he prophesy in regard to what another disciple would do? Who was missing from the group when at midnight they left the upper room? When had Peter told Jesus that he would lay down his life for him? What did Jesus answer? When had Peter shown himself self-seeking? When self-confident? When had Judas showed his love for money?

The Farewell Prayer. At the conclusion of his farewell discourse Jesus offered that wondrously beautiful prayer which John narrates in the seventeenth chapter. "Father, the hour is come. I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."

The singing of the hymn followed—probably the 118th Psalm, one of the Psalms which were always sung at the Passover Feast—"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever." "Arise, let us go hence," was Jesus' signal for departure for the Mount of Olives.

Chronology of Passion Week.

Friday, April 7. Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane about midnight; betrayal and arrest; three trials before the Jewish authorities, (1) before Annas, (2) before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; denial of Peter; (3) formal condemnation by the Sanhedrin at day-break; suicide of Judas; three trials before the civil authorities; (1) before Pilate; (2) before Herod, (3) before Pilate; the people offered their choice of Jesus or Barabbas and Barabbas chosen; Jesus delivered to the soldiers to be mocked and scourged; Pilate's final attempt to have Jesus released; Jesus taken to Golgotha and crucified at nine in the morning; death at three in the afternoon; burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Beyond the Kidron Valley, which winds around the eastern side of Jerusalem, is the Mount of Olives, on whose slope is the Garden of *Gethsemane*. The name "Gethsemane" means literally "oil-garden"; there were olive-trees there and an oil-press. In Palestine the owner has to pay a tax on every fruit-tree he possesses, and it is known that a tax has been paid since the year 636 on the eight olive-trees now in the garden called Gethsemane. I saw nothing in Palestine that so impressed me with its age as did those venerable trees, their dark, twisted trunks, resembling granite more than

wood, patched and built up with stones to keep them from falling. This traditional garden is at the crossing of the roads which lead over Olivet. It is cared for by Franciscan monks and is laid out in flower-beds separated by neat walks. There are cypress as well as olive-trees here. To its shrine-grottoes in the surrounding wall which recall the "stations of the cross" thousands of Russian pilgrims come annually to weep and pray.

Assign paragraph 130 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Knowing the hopeless evil of the heart of Judas, how did Jesus treat him through all those months of companionship and service? He made him a disciple, and in so far as can be discovered, he made no difference between him and the others of the group. He made him a partaker in the deepest spiritual privileges. Judas knew his Master's wonted place of prayer, to which he took the band on the night of the betrayal, because he had often been there with him at the time of prayer. Knowing on that night before his passion that this one was plotting to deliver him to his enemies, he still held him in the group and took him to the room where he would eat the last passover, with his own. It is as though, knowing the hopelessness of his efforts to save this one, he still could not let him go. His heart clung to him with the desperate love of a Savior's heart. The infinite love of the Redeemer refused right down to the gates of hell to let go this wandering soul. It is easy to believe that he who is love just loved him because he was needy, and far from God and lost.

Could ever love go farther in its patience than this wonderful love of Christ for Judas? It is a pattern of the love that the church must have for the reprobate today. How often do Christians sin in giving up the effort to save men because of the apparent hopelessness of winning them! How we need to learn the love of a Father's heart for the prodigal! How we need to be set on fire with the love of God that burned in the heart of Christ!—Condensed from an article by W. B. Anderson.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

"Toward the Garden called Gethsemane
We turn our faces and our steps today
And wait in hushed and pitying grief apart,
While Christ the world's sins takes upon his heart!
For this he came—the Child of Bethlehem!
To meet this hour he trod strange, toilsome roads,
Misunderstood, hated, despised and feared,
He takes at last the heaviest of all loads—
To bear for others punishment and pain,
And so redeem the world for God again!"

For Older Pupils. On the battlefield of Saratoga stands a splendid monument, a tall, hollow shaft, with four niches at its base. In three of the niches are statues of Schuyler, Morgan, and Gates, three of the four generals who fought in the battle against Burgoyne. Who was the fourth general? Why is the fourth niche vacant? In the early part of the war with Great Britain Benedict Arnold displayed great courage and was advanced in rank, but not so rapidly as he thought was his due; others outstripped him, and his disappointment and jealousy, increased by charges brought against him by those who disliked him, as well as his greed for money, led him to betray his country. He had obtained command of West Point, and for £6,300 reward from the British Government he made arrangements to surrender it to the British army. Afterwards he joined the enemy and fought with them against his countrymen. In all our national history the basest traitor is Arnold. Who is the basest traitor in all human history?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE CUP WHICH MY FATHER HATH GIVEN ME

The Cup Which Our Father Giveth Us. It is well to remember that all our experiences are limited and their duration fixed. The cup does not con-

tain an unmeasured supply like the ocean, and the Father who gives it to us has in love and wisdom determined its fulness. We are sometimes apt, under the depression of sorrow, the blight of disappointment, the weariness of toil, to imagine that these things are beyond our bearing power. They are too great to be sustained, there seems to be no end to them, and faith ebbs under their sustained pressure. Well it is then to recall these words of the Savior and make them our own. The Father hath put into the cup just the measure which he knows is needful and sufficient. He is not indifferent to our pain, our weakness, and our sorrow. He is not deaf to our cry, nor careless of our desires, and his answer to them all is the cup which he has given.

And not only is its content measured but its quality is also assured—it is a cup both measured and mixed by the Father himself. Its ingredients are carefully chosen with Divine prevision, and its joys, sorrows, temptations, duties, and responsibilities, all go to make up an elixir of life. As our physician he knows what is needed to heal our diseases, to cool our fevers, to brace our energies, to calm our imagination. He knows, too, as only our Father can, what is needed to strengthen our lives, to develop our powers, to form our character. Thus it is that the cup which he gives us to drink is always a cup of salvation. Fear not to take it then, with all confidence in him, and be assured that the only harm that can come to you is in your unwillingness to drink.

The most solemn of all considerations is as to our power of choice. We can refuse the Father's cup in favor of the world's soothing or intoxicating wines. And such refusal is indeed the tragedy of many a life. God does not force the cup upon us, nor compel us against our will to drink what he has prepared and offers. It is always possible to turn from his love, though to do so is to unwittingly drink to our own destruction. Let us lay then to heart the fact that it is our Father's hand which holds the cup to our trembling lips and strengthen ourselves with the remembrance that his love is—

Too wise to err,
Too good to be unkind.

And in the solitude in which each one must register his supreme spiritual decisions let us face out the question, "Shall I not drink it?" Then with conviction of conscience and constraint of heart, taking up the chalice pledge him in his own vintage, and go forth day by day to live out your sacramental loyalty. And when life is over and Heaven begun, its joy shall be just to drink for ever of the same cup, and to "drink it new" with the Savior in the Kingdom.—Condensed from "Redeeming Vision," by Dr. J. Stuart Holden.

Let Us Drink the Cup, Not Sip It. Have we not sometimes seen a parent coaxing a child to take a distasteful medicine? The little one is assured that the bitterness is nothing, the draught is guilefully disguised, sweets and toys are promised as allurements, and at length the cup is sipped. *Sipped*, and therefore all its bitterness tasted, and it is with the utmost persuasion that at last the medicine is swallowed.

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walk across the water to Jesus, and then, becoming fearful, cried out, "Lord, save me." We see it when he boastfully said, "Though all men shall deny thee, yet will not I!" We see it when, after the arrest, he did not flee with the other disciples but followed "afar off," for he thought he was brave enough to go where he would be tested. Jesus knew Peter, and had given him frequent warnings. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus bade him watch and pray that he might not enter into temptation, but Peter neither watched nor prayed, but trusted in his own power. By the court fire his courage quailed, and he denied his Lord. He was a moral coward.

"Forsake the Christ thou sawest transfigured, him
Who trod the sea and brought the dead to life?
What should wring this from thee! '—Ye laugh and ask,
What wrung it? Even a torchlight and a noise,
The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
And fear of what the Jews might do! Just that,
And it is written, 'I forsook and fled';
There was my trial, and it ended thus.'"

In "Quo Vadis" there is an interesting contest between a gladiator and a net-thrower. The heavily-armed gladiator is a giant, while the net-thrower is small, yet lithe and nimble. The net-thrower succeeds in casting his gossamer-like net over the giant, and despite his shield and breastplate and helmet and sword the giant is entangled and then bound hand and foot. So it was with Peter. Rash as was his attack on Malchus in Gethsemane, it nevertheless showed a spirit that was brave for a great contest. "I will lay down my life for thy sake," Peter had declared to his Lord, and he meant it, too; if a chance had come at that moment to prove him he would have stood the test. But the maid's question on that cold, dreary night after an exhausting experience proved the gossamer net that was his undoing.

Another Moral Coward. "The coward!" exclaimed Harry; "after being with Jesus for three years, and then cruelly to desert him at the time when he most needed his friends! I know that I should have been faithful at any cost."

Several weeks passed; and one Sunday Mr. West noticed Harry seemed depressed, and he did not appear as interested in the lesson as usual. After the school was dismissed, Mr. West asked Harry to walk home with him.

"Well, Harry, what is it?" he asked, as soon as they were seated in Mr. West's study.

Harry looked very serious as he said, "Do you remember, Mr. West, what I said about Peter a few weeks ago?" Mr. West nodded his head.

"I am worse than Peter ever was. Yesterday some fellows from our school went fishing. You know Mr. Warren; the boys called him a hypocrite, and said that his profession of Christianity is only a cloak to hide his meanness. The boys said that Christians are no better than other people, and they quoted irreverently from the Bible, saying things to which no Christian should have listened and remained silent! And I never said a word!"—Serena Clark, in "The Classmate."

Peter was Given Another Chance. Judas fell most grievously, and never rose. Peter fell miserably, but he rose gloriously. Judas was the worthless pebble; Peter was the diamond with the flaw in it, which, as the old proverb says, is more precious than a perfect pebble. Between Peter in Pilate's courtyard and Peter at Pentecost what a contrast! Truly Longfellow tells us in "The Sifting of Peter":

Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession;
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.
But noble souls, through dust and heat
Rise from disaster and defeat,
The stronger;
And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. The difference between Judas and many men is that they often sell their Lord for less!—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Verse 11. I require a well-kept life to *do* the will of God, and even a better-kept life to *will* to do his will.—Henry Drummond.

Verse 17. Temptation is the one certainty—the one immediate certainty, before us all.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

Verse 17. A river is not judged by its shoals, but by its current; and in like manner a life is not judged by its eddies of temptation, but by its tendency, its direction, its goal.—Frances E. Willard.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

And as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I walk therein,
Not like the hireling for his selfish gain,
But cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led,—
Doing God's will as if it were my own.

—Whittier.

A man said to me recently: "I want you to explain to me the mystery of the choice of Judas. Why did Christ bear with Judas for three years?" I replied: "My friend, I have never had time to think about the case of Judas, because for the last fifteen years or more I have been pondering the mystery of Christ's choice of me, and why he bears with me."—J. Stuart Holden.

Abraham failed in his faith, Moses in his meekness, Job in his patience, Peter in his courage—each one where he was seemingly the strongest. Do you feel secure in the possession of certain virtues? May it not be that just there you need to be on guard?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The problem of Judas. See the Second Topic, and "Meditations" in "The Outlook" for Feb. 27, 1909.
2. The problem of Peter. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Study the accounts of the trial and crucifixion in all the Gospels. 2. Tell about the three trials before the Jewish authorities. 3. How many trials were there before civil authorities? 4. What was the accusation made against Jesus before the Sanhedrin? 5. What was the accusation before Pilate? 6. Why was Jesus sent to Herod? 7. What did Pilate have done to Jesus which he hoped would satisfy the people? 8. What was Pilate's decision concerning Jesus? 9. Who besides Pilate declared the innocence of Jesus at this time? (Mt. 27.3-5; Jn. 18.38; Lk. 23.47.) 10. Where was Golgotha? (*Guide*, p. 224.) 11. Why do we call Golgotha Calvary? (*Guide*, p. 220.) 12. What was the time of the crucifixion? (*Guide*, p. 223.) 13. What details do the other evangelists give about the crucifixion which John omits? 14. What was the nature of the "vinegar" given Jesus? (*Guide*, p. 221.) 15. What are the seven "words," or sentences, spoken by Jesus from the cross? 16. What were Jesus' last words? (Lk. 23.46.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What do you think of Pilate's course? 2. Why was the inscription written in three languages? 3. Did Jesus claim to be a king? What was the nature of his kingship? 4. Who is the disciple referred to in verse 26? 5. How many women are mentioned in verse 25? (*Guide*, p. 221.) 6. What was "finished," verse 30? (Rom. 5.7, 8.) 7. What is the meaning of "gave up his spirit"? 8. What was the true reason why the Pharisees and scribes wanted Jesus put to death? 9. Why did Jesus accept his death on the cross? 10. Why was it his Father's will that he should be crucified? 11. Was the death of Jesus a tragedy? 12. Was it also a triumph? 13. What effect should the thought of the crucifixion have upon us?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the stanza on p. 229. In your Note-Book write "XX Jesus Betrayed and Denied."

JESUS CRUCIFIED

Golden Text

Christ died for our sins. 1 Corinthians 15:3.

LESSON John 19:16-30: verses 16-22, 25-30 printed
MEMORIZE verses 26, 27

16 Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

17 They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: 18 where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. 19 And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not the King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

28 After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. 29 There was set there a vessel of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Via Dolorosa, 16-17.
- II. The Crucifixion, 18.
- III. The Title over the Cross, 19-22.
- IV. The Bystanders, 23-27.
 1. The Soldiers, 23-24.
 2. The Marys and John, 25-27.
- V. The Death, 28-30.

16. *Then therefore.* Since the Jews persisted in demanding Jesus' death.—*He.* Pilate, who was Procurator of Judea 26-36 A.D.—*Delivered him unto them.* Delivered Jesus unto the executioners. "In ancient times there were no executioners, properly speaking. Oriental sovereigns who were every day commanding decapitations constantly kept executioners near them among their guards, and the Romans put their condemned to death by means of soldiers. Those of Jerusalem pertained to the auxiliary troops, always very ill made up; and it was to this brutal soldiery, habituated to cruelty and indifferent to suffering from constantly witnessing it, that Jesus was given up" (Stapfer).

17. *He went out.* Out beyond the city walls.—*Bearing the cross himself.* This was according to Roman custom with condemned criminals, but the other Gospels tell us that Jesus was unable to carry it far, and part of the way it was borne by Simon of Cyrene.—*Which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.* In Latin it is called *Calvaris*, whence comes our word *Calvary*.

18. *With him two others.* See Mt. 27:38, 44; Lk. 23:39-43.

19. *A title.* The "title" at such a time was the name of the crime which the one crucified had committed. Pilate knew of no crime of which Jesus had been guilty: he had this inscription written so as to annoy the priests who, as he expected, considered the superscription an insult to themselves.

20. *It was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek.* That all who



THE "UNFINISHED CHRIST"

From a Painting of The Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci

passed by could read it, for these were the languages spoken through the civilized world of the time. "It was written in Greek, and the Greeks were the lovers of the beautiful. Here hung One altogether lovely. It was written in Latin, and the Romans were worshipers of power. Here hung the Omnipotent. It was written in Hebrew, and the Jews were the worshipers of the spiritual. Suspended here was the Holy One of Israel."

22. *What I have written I have written.* A scornful answer. Though Pilate had weakly yielded to the Jews, this remark substantiates Philo's characterization of him as "by nature obstinate and stubborn; at once self-willed, and implacable." "An ounce of courage at the commencement of a crime is worth a ton of obstinacy just as you are being overwhelmed with the result of crime" (Bull).

23. *To every soldier a part.* The garments of a victim were the perquisites of the executioners.—*The coat.* Or, *tunic*, RVm. The undergarment.

24. *The Scriptures.* See Ps. 22:18.

25. *By the cross of Jesus his mother.* Recall Simeon's prophecy, "a sword shall pierce thine own heart also."—*And his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas.* These two phrases may be understood as referring to one woman, but in that case, the two sisters were both called Mary, which is unlikely. If they refer to different women, "his mother's sister" is Salome, the mother of the apostle John: see Mt. 27:56, and Mary the wife of Clopas is the mother of James and Joses.

26. *The disciple whom he loved.* John the apostle and evangelist, who never mentions his own name in his Gospel.—*Woman.* The Greek *Γυναίκα* is a title of respect.

28. *After this.* During the interval probably occurred the darkness, and the cry of Jesus narrated in Mt. 27:45, 46; Mk. 15:33, 34.—*That the Scripture might be accomplished.* See Ps. 69:21 and Jn. 17:4. This is John's comment as he looked backward in thought upon the scene: do not make the mistake of taking the words to mean that Jesus said "I thirst" so as to fulfil scripture.

29. *Full of vinegar.* It was the *posca*, the sour wine which was the usual drink of Roman soldiers.—*Hyssop.* What the hyssop was is not known, but it is usually held to be the stalk of the caper, which still grows near Jerusalem to a height of three or four feet. The cross was but slightly elevated, and with a sponge fastened to the end of a reed a foot or two in length they could easily reach his mouth.

30. *It is finished.* The sixth word. This, as Matthew Henry says, is "a comprehensive word and a comfortable one." Finished, in the sense of ended, were his sufferings, and finished, in the sense of completed, was the purpose which God gave him to accomplish in coming to this world. "It is a triumphant exclamation, meaning: 'God's will is obeyed; man's redemption is secured; immortal victory is won; heaven is opened to man; the gloom of the grave is changed into the glory of resurrection and ascension with Christ'" (Caswell).—*And gave up his spirit.* His death was voluntary. See Jn. 10:18.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

16. *To be crucified.* There was a sentence in the Law which invoked the special and irrevocable curse of God upon him who "hung upon a tree." If Jesus should be crucified, he will come under that curse, and then, said the cunning Pharisees, we shall see what will become of his Messianic Sonship. . . . And Jesus was crucified. He came under the curse of the law. He was made anathema to it. He was cast beyond its mercy and its salvation. At the door of hell, said the Jewish teacher, sits Abraham, to see that no son of his shall pass within. But there is no forgiveness in the hereafter, as there is no mercy here, for him who has come under the curse of the law. He must go to his place, and Abraham will not know him as he enters there, for the curse of the Law is upon him. . . . When the disciples preached the resurrection of Christ, the Pharisees, who did not disbelieve in the rising again from the dead, found this intolerable. It was impossible to admit it. For them there was no alternative but that he is the Messiah the Son of God as he claimed to be; and it is the Law, not he, that is trampled under foot and put to an open shame.—"Expository Times."

31. *The bodies should not remain on the cross upon the Sabbath.* The law

according to Deuteronomy 21.22, 23, was: "And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." The Sabbath began at sunset and was now close at hand. It was an especially holy day, because both the Sabbath and the day of the great feast, and the Jews would not have the land made Levitically unclean on that day. It was the Roman custom to leave bodies on the cross to be devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey.

31. *The Jews asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken.* This was a Roman custom. It was possible for a crucified one to live even thirty-six hours, and by this practice his death was hastened. The instep or ankle was struck by an iron mallet or bar, breaking the bones, and leaving the weight of the body to be borne by the hands and support of the cross.

38. *Pilate gave him leave.* According to Roman law, avaricious governors sometimes sold this privilege. Cicero, in one of his orations against Verres, has a terribly graphic passage describing such extortions. After dwelling upon the tortures inflicted upon the condemned, he says: "Yet death is the end. It shall not be. Can cruelty go further? A way shall be found. For the bodies of the beheaded shall be thrown to the beasts. If this is grievous to parents, they may buy the liberty of burial."—M. R. Vincent, in "Word Studies."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What had been the spirit of the multitude as Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time? How long ago was that entry? Who had said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," and to whom did he say it? What was said in an early lesson about the serpent in the wilderness and Jesus being lifted up? What does John 3.16 give as the reason for Christ's death? What did Paul say in his letter to the Corinthians the cross was to the Jews, to the Greeks, and to the followers of Christ? (1 Cor. 1.23—a lesson of last year.)

The Three Trials before the Jewish Authorities. The trial of Jesus was sixfold: three times before the Jewish authorities, and three before Roman officials. The preliminary trial before Annas is given by John. Annas had been high priest, and seems to have retained the title. As Annas failed to entrap Jesus, he was brought before Caiaphas, the high priest, and an informal committee of the Sanhedrin, and later before a regular meeting of this Jewish court. The last two Jewish trials are narrated in the Synoptic Gospels.

At this informal trial no witnesses were called, but an attempt was made to ensnare Jesus in his own words. Jesus rightly demanded that charges should be brought by witnesses, saying he had taught openly and those who had heard him could answer Annas. Whereupon a brutal officer struck Jesus, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" "If I have spoken evil bear witness to the evil," returned Jesus, "but if well, why smitest thou me?"

From Annas Jesus was taken to Caiaphas, the high priest whom the Romans recognized, and an informal committee of the Sanhedrin which had been hastily summoned. False witnesses were sought, and two were selected who testified, "This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." Thus did they pervert his saying about his own death.

"Answerest thou nothing?" asked Caiaphas, but Jesus calmly held his peace. Only when formally put on oath did he solemnly assert that he was indeed the Son of God, and added that he should sit hereafter on the right hand of Power. What mattered it to the Sanhedrin if they had found no charge worthy of the ear of the Roman governor who alone could put Jesus to death? They could condemn him on a religious charge, and Caiaphas could turn that charge into a political one. Accordingly, Caiaphas accused Jesus of blasphemy, and according to custom, rent his garment in token of his horror. Then he put the question—"What think ye?" The ready answer came—"He is worthy of death." The scene closed with infamous treatment of Jesus: spat upon, struck and further insulted, he still "held his peace." After daybreak the Sanhedrin held a formal meeting, for that held during the night was illegal, and condemned Jesus to that death to which they

had already judged him worthy. He was then bound and delivered to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator.

The Three Trials Before the Roman Authorities. John omits the trials before the Sanhedrin and gives that before Pilate, who alone had power to pass sentence of death. The priests refused to enter the Judgment Hall, for there might be leaven in the palace and then they would be "defiled" and unable to partake of the Passover feast. The proud governor was thus forced to come out to them and ask what was their accusation. Insolently they answered, "If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up to thee." "Take him yourselves," then returned Pilate contemptuously, "and judge him according to your law." They were thus forced to acknowledge sullenly that they could not put a man to death, and to prefer as charge against their Prisoner, not the one of blasphemy about which the Roman governor would not trouble himself, but one of sedition. "We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself was Christ a king."

Pilate marveled at the silence of Jesus during this charge, and took him into the Prætorium to question him. "Art thou a King of the Jews?" he asked. "What hast thou done?" "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus replied; "if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight." "I find no fault in him," said Pilate, again going out to the chief priests. "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place," they cried. The word Galilee struck Pilate. Jesus belonged, then, to Herod's jurisdiction, he would send him to Herod, and thus make friends with Herod and free himself from the troublesome matter.

Herod was glad to see Jesus, because "he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him"; but to all his questions, Jesus answered nothing. Then Herod and his soldiers mocked him, arrayed him in gorgeous robes of royalty, and sent him back again to Pilate.

The effort to shift the responsibility to Herod having failed, Pilate went to the palace gate, and to the members of the Sanhedrin and the people he declared that both he and Herod had found no fault in Jesus. He would therefore scourge him and let him go. Pilate was greatly troubled by his own conviction that Jesus was innocent and also by the warning of his wife, who had sent to him this message, "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." It was the custom for the governor to release one prisoner at this feast of the Passover, and Pilate asked the people whom they would have released, Barabbas or Jesus. The priests persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas. "What shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?" asked Pilate. "Let him be crucified," they shouted. "Why, what evil hath he done?" Pilate asked, and still the rabble shouted, "Let him be crucified." What a spectacle was this, Pilate, the man in authority, knowing the right, and yet almost begging the people to let him do the right!

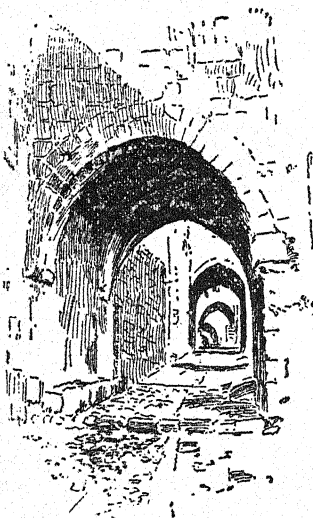
Pilate had Jesus scourged, and then as he was brought before the people Pilate said, "Behold the man!" If he hoped that the sight of the suffering Man would appease the crowd, he was mistaken, for they only renewed their cry of "Crucify him! crucify him!"

Once again Pilate questioned Jesus, but Jesus gave no answer. "Speakest thou not unto me?" said the troubled ruler: "Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" "Thou wouldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above," is Jesus' calm, majestic answer. Pilate returned to the crowd still wishing that he might free Jesus, but the Jews brought a personal motive to bear upon him. "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." What was one innocent man's life worth when weighed in the balance with the self-interest of a weak, unscrupulous man? Pilate took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." And all the people shouted, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Pilate then ordered Barabbas released and Jesus delivered to be crucified.

The Time of the Crucifixion. The time was from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon of Friday, April 7, A.D. 30. See the Chronology on page 214.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Along the traditional Via Dolorosa, or Sorrowful Way, which leads to the traditional site of *Calvary*, fourteen tablets mark the "stations of the cross,"



A Glimpse along the Via Dolorosa

but it is needless to say that the way trodden by the feet of Jesus is hidden beneath the surface of modern Jerusalem, for the city has suffered siege after siege and been many times razed to the ground. No one knows where are the sites of the stations of the cross, but the actual site of "The Pavement" where Pilate yielded to the Jews and gave Jesus up to be crucified has been unearthed. See "For Older Pupils," below.

The traditional place of the crucifixion is beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The site accepted by most scholars is an oval, or skull-shaped, hill outside the city wall on the north not far from St. Stephen's Gate.

Assign paragraphs 121 and 126 of "In the Master's Country."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

When Paul is proclaiming a duty, he links it to the Crucifixion, to the crucified Christ. He drives all his duties home with the power of the Gospel of the crucified Christ. All his tools are armed with one handle. I do not know anything more ineffective and more provoking than to have a gimlet with no handle to it. You cannot drive a pricker far without a handle, and you cannot get a gimlet into the wood without a handle; and you cannot drive a duty, you cannot prick man's conscience to the very core, unless you handle the duty as Paul handled it, and drive it home by the power of the crucified Christ. And, therefore, I put the searching question, Have we got that emphasis in our teaching, and do we make it quite clear and apparent? When we have proclaimed a duty, is the dynamic just as manifest? When we present an ideal, are the resources as conspicuous? Do we link all our imperatives to the power of the Gospel of Christ?—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "Apostolic Optimism."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Frederick Arnot, the missionary explorer, was once going through the tall African grass with his black lads when a great lion sprang out toward the last boy in the line. Instantly Arnot threw himself between them, and the lion, confused, quickly fled. When the chief of the tribe heard of this incident, he said: "I'd go anywhere with a white man who throws his own body between a lion and a black lad of no account." Don't you think we should be willing to go anywhere with the Savior who died on the cross to save us from a worse fate than that from which the missionary saved the no-account boy? What does our Golden Text say? Who wrote these words?

For Older Pupils. You are all familiar with the picture of the "Ecce Homo Arch" in Jerusalem, the arch which bears the words of Pilate, "Behold the man." It is part of an ancient Roman triumphal arch (the room above being modern) which spans a narrow street. Once there were side arches and the street was wide. The building on the right belongs to the "Sisters of Zion" and stands on the site of the Prætorium, or Hall of Judgment, where Pontius Pilate lived and before whom Jesus was tried. Forty years ago, when the rubbish on this site was cleared for the present church and schools of the Sisters of Zion, the northernmost of the two smaller arches was brought to light, and may now be seen within the buildings. In excavating beneath this, several feet below the street surface, large thick stone slabs that formed a Roman pavement were discovered. The slabs that are in line with the large

central arch are grooved, roughened for the feet of animals, while those underneath the smaller arch are smooth for the use of pedestrians. This pavement extends far under the buildings and has not yet been wholly excavated. Archaeologists agree that this was the very Roman pavement on which Christ stood, and the large stone bench found here, about four feet high, may have been the *bema*, the judgment-seat (Jn. 19.13) from which Pilate ordered him to be crucified.

As I stood on this ancient Roman pavement I recalled that sad scene of nearly two thousand years ago. Gone was the street above that shut us in, and we were out in the open upon a public square facing Pilate's beautiful palace. It was very early in the morning. The chief priests and elders and a great crowd of other Jews had stopped before the palace. Jesus was in their midst, his hands bound, his face the only calm one in all that excited crowd. (See the Historical Background.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE VICTORY OF THE CROSS

What Africans Say. When Dan Crawford was lecturing in our country he told us that the people of Central Africa always use a technical phrase in the Bantu language when speaking of the death of Christ. They always call it "the victory of Golgotha." Mr. Crawford once said to them: "Tell me what that means, I cannot understand it. When the very God became very man and died the death of a felon, I cannot understand how you people see anything but defeat in it." A man took a little stick and holding it up said, "Here is the cross." Then he took another little stick and laying it across the first one said: "Just here at the cross where Satan did his very, very worst, just here, just then, God did his very, very best." At the cross the very worst and the very best met, and there was a glorious victory for the world.

The Changed Attitude toward the Cross.

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

Thus we sing today. But how differently was the cross regarded at the time of Christ's crucifixion! Then, like the gallows with us, it was associated only with degradation; to die on the cross was to suffer the most ignominious death possible. Rome had borrowed the cross from the East, but she would not use it for her meanest citizen. When Christ died upon it, instead of the cross eclipsing his name, his name transfigured the cross. His disciples went forth and preached Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God; and the cross of shame became at once the cross of glory.

A Triumphant Death. Recall how Christ himself spoke of the cross, and in what spirit he approached it. You will remember two things: first, that Christ spoke of the cross very early in his ministry, and, second, that he always spoke of it as something predetermined. Did he not distinctly declare that he laid down his life, but that no man took it from him; and do we not find at every point of the unfolding tragedy the reiteration of that phrase so constantly associated with the incident of his infancy—"that it might be fulfilled"? When once we grasp this truth, the sense of the merely tragic in Calvary is lost in the sense of the purely triumphant. We see the various actors in the drama—Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate—all falling into place, as at some mystic signal; each doing something that had to be done, each doing something dictated by the grossness of his nature, and thus something for which he is answerable: but also doing something that was an unconscious fulfillment of a program; and Jesus himself passed through all these scenes with the sublime steadfastness of one who knows that thus it must be. This is the joy of the cross. Jesus has not lost his way. He moves steadily to his goal. He is no victim of accident—at every step something was done which was long predicted, something that the will of God made necessary and inevitable.—Dr. W. J. Dawson, in "The Reproach of Christ."

Artists' Lessons. In the Museum at Antwerp there is a picture called "The Dead Christ," painted by Van Dyke. The Savior lies at the foot of the cross, his head supported in his mother's arms. John is pointing to the motionless figure and looking at two angels who stand near; his face is full of amazement and he seems to be asking them whether this is the end of all their hopes, but the angels have hidden their faces in their hands. On Mary's face shines the explanation. She is looking up to God exultingly. For her Divine Son has accomplished the work that God gave him to do. The Life of Sorrow ended in tragedy, the taunting and ignominy culminated in a criminal's death, but it was a triumphant, glorious death, a death that was the greatest victory the world has ever known.

In another art gallery there are three pictures which portray the soul's progressive attitude toward the Crucified Christ. In the first a man stands before the Christ on the cross, thoughtful, questioning; he does not understand the mystery, why God allowed the Sinless One to be crucified. In the second the same man kneels before the cross: he has in a measure grasped the thought of Isaiah's word which follows our Golden Text: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed": with grateful heart he recognizes in Jesus his own Lord and Redeemer. The third picture shows the man lying at the foot of the cross: he has dedicated his life to his Redeemer's service.

I Will Draw All Men to Me. An immense electromagnet was built recently by an industrial corporation in order to save waste pieces of iron and steel. It was placed on a flat car and sent over the tracks that ran through the shops and foundries, and covered acres of yard in every direction.

The result was astonishing. When the crane that supported the magnet was swung out and the electric current turned on, the magnet drew pieces of metal from the piles of dust and rubbish that proved to be the "missing parts" of machines long since given over for lost. Elsewhere the ground was seen to swell and crack, and after the earth had been loosened with pick and shovel, the magnet drew out the "buried mistakes" that workmen had hurriedly concealed from the eyes of foremen and superintendents. Even the "insignificant" and apparently worthless sparks from the chimneys and rust flakes from the pig iron were gathered up by the magnet and restored to usefulness.

Just so does God's Magnet, Jesus Christ, gather to himself from the waste heaps of humanity and restore to useful service those who have been missing from their rightful places in home, society, and church, those whose former lives have been woeful mistakes, and those who have come to think of themselves as too insignificant to be of any use in the complex life of today.

No one is beyond the uplifting power of Jesus. He still draws all kinds of men unto himself.—"Youth's Companion."

II THE REASON FOR THE CROSS

Christ Died for Our Sins. By his death on the cross he loosed us from our sins. This cutting out of the sins of a man's life was the most wonderful miracle which Jesus Christ claimed to have performed. We may not understand why, we may not understand how, but that there is a necessary connection between the sufferings and death of Christ on the Cross and emancipation from the power of sin and the washing away of sin stains there can be no question in the light of the accumulating experience of multitudes of conscientious men. In other words, we are not our own, but we are bought with a price. And that death on the cross gave Christ proprietary rights in each Christian.

Therefore it is unfair and dishonest not to give him absolute sway over us. He has the right to us. Purchase gives title. Delivery gives possession. Christ has purchased us. Let us give him what he has purchased. Let us hand ourselves over to him. I say by what he has done he has a right to us; and it is an exceeding belittling of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross that it does not impel us to cast ourselves and all we have quickly at his feet, rather than letting it simply move us to reluctant and abridged and calculating gifts of parts of ourselves or of parts of what we have. Not so was it with Zinzendorff. One day, walking along a village street, he went into

a little church, and while lingering there had his attention arrested by a painting that set forth the sufferings on the cross of our Savior, and as his eyes were fixed upon that scene of suffering love he noticed this couplet below:

"All this I did for thee.
What hast thou done for Me?"

He was melted. He was subjugated. He rose a changed man. He went out to live that wonderful life, and inaugurated the movement which has planted in all parts of the world the Moravian Missions. Because of what Christ did he has a right to dominate every one of us.—Dr. John R. Mott, in "Consecration."

Reasons Given by Christ Himself. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Trying to Save Himself from His Sins. "One day," writes a missionary from Basim, South India, "I saw a Hindu literally rolling along in the road. I stopped him and inquired about his itinerary. He replied that his home was in Amratsi, a hundred miles north of here, and that he expected to travel as far as Pandharpur, making a total distance of three hundred and fifty miles. Earnestly he added that after he had reached Pandharpur he knew God would bless him and forgive his sins.

"I told him that this self-torture was quite unnecessary, that God had sent his Son into the world for the sake of saving all mankind from their sins. But the poor fellow shook his head, refusing to believe me. 'I must keep on,' he said. 'There is nothing else for me to do.' And away he rolled."

A Man for Whom Christ Died. At her dock in Hoboken a great ocean liner was getting ready to sail on her long voyage. "There are some missionaries sailing on that steamer," said I to a friend; "don't you want to—" "Why certainly," he interrupted, "I should like to go. It does me good to see missionaries go out."

We made our way to the dock, and aboard the steamer. "Now," said my friend, "we will just hunt up those missionaries and shake hands with them. Second cabin, I suppose?" Instead, I led him into the steerage. There I said: "Doctor, there are the missionaries!" and I indicated the happy horde of Italians who crowded the place.

"Those?" he began. Then he added, "Oh, I see! Emigrants returning to Italy. Sure!" Then after another minute he remarked: "Those fellows are, after all, missionaries—American missionaries, carrying American ideas home. Not many Baptists, I suppose?"

As we went among them, we came to one young fellow tall, swarthy, and forbidding in appearance. "Baptist?" I asked. Instantly his countenance changed to rare brightness, and he replied, "I am the man for whom Christ died!" It was a very simple reply, but I do not know that I ever had one that thrilled me more. He went on to say that he was a Congregationalist from Newark, and that he had an equipment of Bibles in the vernacular which he was taking home with him. "Our folks in Cusomomatri never see Bibles," he said, "and never knew the real way in which Christ died for them. I'll tell them." Then warming to his subject he said: "I shall tell them I prospered in Ame-ree-ca, that I bring home big pile of lira, earned in my business, and that I vote in Newark, and that—right best of all—I have learned good news, and am the man for whom Christ died!"—Condensed from "The Western Christian Advocate."

III OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CRUCIFIED

Should We Not Love Him? There is a fine tale told of the old days before there was gunpowder and when war was a simpler thing than it is now. The

enemy came swooping down in the darkness and surrounded a lonely garrison, and hoped to shoot them down or starve them into surrendering. Yet the soldiers in the garrison had friends, strong friends and many of them; only the soldiers couldn't tell them the danger they were in, or call for their help, without lighting the cresset fire which hung by its chain high up where the enemy would see the man who tried to kindle it, and would shoot him down at the first spark he made. But if ever they were to be delivered that signal must be made; the cresset fire must be kindled.

One man at length stepped forth, and said he would fire the beacon. He knew what it meant; ah, yes! he knew; but he was ready, quite ready. He kneeled and prayed and then sprang to his feet, grasped the torch, leapt on the ramparts, and climbed to the beacon, while a shower of arrows came whizzing upon him. But the beacon was fired; its flame shot up like a cry for help, and their friends understood it and marched to the rescue, and drove back the enemy, and delivered the garrison.

But the poor fellow who had kindled the beacon, where was he? Lying asleep in a soldier's grave. He had died to save his comrades.

Was there a soldier of them all that night who did not love and honor the man who had saved them? No, not one.

And "Christ died for us"—died for you, died for me, died for everybody. Shouldn't we love him? shouldn't we praise him? shouldn't we live for him? Ah, yes, we should.—J. Reid Howatt, "The Children's Preacher."

Should We Not Live for Him? A simple story has come to me, I cannot remember where, of a woman in southern China in the province of Kwangtung. She had a serious illness and was taken to a mission hospital in Canton for treatment. There for the first time she heard of Christ, of his love and death. And that story coming so new and fresh transformed her, as she opened her heart to the Savior. And a great peace came into her heart, and showed plainly in her face. Then her thought began turning to her own village. Not a soul there knew of this wondrous Savior. If they but knew. But what could she do, her illness was very serious.

The next time the physician came by she asked him how long she would live if she stayed there. He said that he did not know, but he thought about six months. And how long if she left the hospital and returned home. He didn't know; maybe three months. And after he had gone she quietly announced that she was going home. And those about her were greatly astonished. "Why," they said, "you'll lose half your life!" And the tears came into her eyes, as a gentle smile overspread her poor worn face, and she simply said, "Jesus gave his whole life for me; don't you think I'm glad to give half mine for him?" I don't know how long she lived. The story didn't say, but it did tell that most of the people in her village knew a long life, even an everlasting life, because of her simple telling of the Gospel story.—S. D. Gordon, in "Quiet Talks on Following the Christ."

Should We Not Serve Him? In 1745, when Prince Charlie landed and set up his standard at Glenfillan, one of the chiefs, Cameron of Lochiel, thought he saw that the enterprise was hopeless, defeat was certain, and that he would go and reason with the Prince. His brother said to him, "Go not near the Prince; let him have your views in writing, but go not near him, for so fascinating is the power of his person that he will toss your mind like a feather in the wind, and you will be unable to do what you wish." However, Cameron would not be dissuaded, so he went to the Prince, and expostulated with him as to the hopelessness of the enterprise. The Prince, looking him straight in the face, said to him, "My father hath often told me how one Lochiel, in the days gone by, has done brave deeds for his king. But tomorrow the standard will be raised and you will go to your home, and at your fireside will learn the fortunes or fate of your Prince." Then the chieftain was roused, and said, "The standard will be raised, and I will be there, and every man of my clan will pour out his blood to the last drop for his Prince."

Is it not so with our blessed Prince? Has he no fascination for us? Shall he go alone to travail again, to yearn over a world which knows him not, because we refuse to go with him in the enterprise? Hearken once again, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Shall we not respond, "My blessed Savior, since thou goest into the conflict, I go also, and by the power of thy grace, my life shall ever be thine"? And henceforth it shall be our

experience that he, the Prince, the Man of Calvary, leadeth us "in the paths of righteousness for his Name's sake."—J. Stuart Holden, in "Supposition and Certainty."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 17. Archimedes wanted a fulcrum on which to place a lever, and then, he said, he could move the world; Calvary is the fulcrum, and the cross of Christ is the lever; by that power all nations shall be lifted.—Talmage.

Verse 19. Christ missed being King of the Jews in order that he might be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.—James Stalker.

Verse 30. When I visit the Cross and the Tomb, life is transformed for me from a picnic into a crusade.—J. H. Jowett.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

He who can think of the crucifixion of Christ, knowing that he thus suffered for the sins of the world, and yet be unmoved or indifferent to him, is not wholly different from the soldiers who parted his garments among them and then sat down to watch him with cruel indifference.

Jesus Christ has finished his part on earth of God's work: are you doing your part? On a crucifix in an Eastern Monastery these Latin words are inscribed: *Tot pro te: quot pro me?* (Thus much on thy account: how much on mine?)

The Way of Sorrows thou for me hast trod,
My feet are loath to follow thee, O God!
Thy sacred hands were pierced for love of me,
My hands, O Jesu, labor not for thee.
The cruel Cross thou, Lord, for me didst bear.
Would I—a craven—fail thy load to share?
The thief who cried to thee thou didst not spurn,
With penitence and love to thee I turn;
Unstable, weak, yet would I follow thee.
Lord Jesus, guide and strengthen even me!

—Harriet Appleton Sprague.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The courage of Christ at the Crucifixion. See "The Churchman," July 12, 1913.
2. The Atonement. See "The Outlook," Jan. 26, 1916, p. 238; Section CXXVIII of "The One Volume Commentary."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What did the centurion say about the Crucified? (Lk. 23.47.) 2. Who was Joseph of Arimathea and what did he do? (Mt. 27.57-60; Mk. 15.43-47; Lk. 23.50-55; Jn. 19.38-42.) 3. Where and how was Jesus buried? 4. How and why was the tomb made secure? 5. Where is the traditional site? (*Guide*, p. 233.) 6. Where is the "Garden Tomb" which answers to all the descriptions given in the Gospels? (*Guide*, p. 233.) 7. What do the Gospels say about the resurrection itself? (*Guide*, p. 232.) 8. Who was Mary Magdalene? (Lk. 8.2; 23.49, 55; 24.1-10; Jn. 19.25.) 9. On what occasion was Peter rebuked for objecting to Jesus' declaration of his coming suffering, death, and resurrection? (Mk. 8.31-33.) 10. What impression had been made on the chief priests by Jesus' words in regard to his revelation? (Mt. 27.62-66.) 11. What did Paul say about the resurrection? (1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5.15-17; Eph. 2.4, 5; Col. 3.1.) 12. Give the appearances of the Risen Lord in their probable order. (*Guide*, p. 232.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Mary linger so long at the tomb? 2. What may have kept John from entering the tomb at once? 3. Why are the details about the linen cloths and napkin recorded? 4. Why did not Mary recognize Jesus at once? 5. Why did Jesus say to her "Touch me not"? (*Guide*, p. 231.) 6. What is the force of his remark about his not having yet ascended to the Father? (*Guide*, p. 231.) 7. Why ought the disciples to have expected Jesus to rise? 8. Why did they not? 9. What is the message of the resurrection to us?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the stanzas on p. 236. In your Note-Book write "XXI Jesus Crucified."

THE RISEN LORD

Golden Text

Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep. 1 Corinthians 15:20

LESSON John 20:1-18. verses 2-16 printed

MEMORIZE verses 15, 16

2 She turneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; 5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Visits to the Tomb, 1-10.
 1. Mary Magdalene's, 1, 2.
 2. Peter's and John's and the Effect upon Them, 3-10.
- II. The Risen Christ, 11-18.
 1. Mary Meets the Angels, 11-13.
 2. Mary Meets the Lord, 14-16.
 3. The Lord's Commission, 17, 18.

1. *On the first day.* Sunday. See p. 231.—*Mary Magdalene.* See Jn. 19:25; Lk. 8:2. There were others with her, as the pronoun "we" in verse 2 indicates: see Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1; Lk. 24:1, 10. They had come to embalm the body of Jesus.—*Early.* While it was yet dark. As it began to dawn, says Matthew; when the sun was risen, says Mark; very early in the morning, Luke. The women evidently started for the tomb while it was yet dark, yet the entry of the tomb occurred by daylight. "I never stand in a summer's morning before the sun dawns, long before waked by birds, to look out upon the yet dim and dusky landscape, that I do not think that this is the hour of resurrection. To them that have an imagination therefore, a resurrection day, which sets forth all those noble and beauteous features in nature, and symbolizes forever and forever the resurrection of our Master" (Henry Ward Beecher).—*The stone.* See Mt. 27:66; Mk. 15:46.

2. *She turneth therefore.* While she hastened off, the others probably

remained at the tomb and the events recorded in Mt. 28.5-8; Mk. 16.5-8; and Lk. 24.4-10 took place.—*To Simon Peter.* Notwithstanding his denial of his Lord, Peter is still the leader among the disciples.—*The other disciple whom Jesus loved.* John.

4. *The other disciple outran Peter.* John was the younger.

5. *The linen cloths lying.* See Jn. 19.40 and p. 232.—*Yet entered he not in.* Perhaps John was lost in wonder and reflection; perhaps a feeling of reverence kept him from entering.

7. *The napkin.* See Jn. 11.44. All the details of this verse show that there was no haste when Jesus left the tomb. Had his body been carried off by others, the grave cloths would naturally have been taken with it.

8. *Then entered in therefore the other disciple also.* Because Peter had entered.—*He saw and believed.* That Jesus was risen: see the next verse.

9. *The scripture.* Ps. 16.10; Acts 2.25-28. John here declares that till he saw proof of the fact, he had not realized that Jesus must rise from the dead. See Jesus' words to the disciples in Mt. 16.21; Mk. 8.31, and Lk. 9.22, and compare the words of the chief priests in Mt. 27.62-66.

10. *Their own home.* Where they were staying in Jerusalem.

11. *But Mary was standing without.* She had followed the two disciples, and they had now left the tomb. "A stronger affection riveted to the spot a weaker nature" (Augustine).

12. *Two angels.* One angel is mentioned in Mt. and Mark, and two in Luke. As a commentator remarks, minute and detailed agreement in independent narratives under such circumstances of excitement would be suspicious. The Greek word for an *angel* means "one who is sent with a message."—*In white.* Supply *raiment*: the word "white" is an adjective in the Greek.

14. *And knew not that it was he.* The Synoptists (Mt. 28.17; Mk. 16.12; Lk. 24.16, 37) and John (21.4) speak of his form as altered; her eyes, moreover, were dim with tears. "John's insight taught him first to conclude his Lord had risen; Mary's want brought her Lord first to satisfy it" (Luthardt).

15. *Supposing him to be the gardener.* The only one who would naturally be there at this hour.

16. *Mary.* "It was almost twenty-five years ago that, as I was sitting in a railroad train at a station, I heard some one outside pronounce the name of her sister in such a way that I do not forget it, even after a quarter of a century. It was a little girl, and she was very glad to get her sister home again. There is much just in a name when pronounced by a person capable of feeling deeply. There may be more in a name than could be expressed in volumes, just as there may be more in a moment than can be expressed in a life-time. So it was when Jesus called Mary by name, and she called him Master" (Edward Everett Hale, Jr.).—*Rabboni.* According to Edersheim, this was the Galilean form of *Rabbi*.

17. *Touch me not.* Or, *Take not hold on me*, RVm. "The words were spoken to teach Mary that there was a far higher way of touching Christ than with the hand of flesh; the truer way to lay hold of Christ was by the grasp of faith" (Augustine).—*For I am not yet ascended unto the Father.* The old, familiar fellowship was not to be renewed, only after his ascension a new and spiritual communion would be established between him and his followers.—*But go.* You have gazed long enough at the empty tomb; go and make known the wonderful fact that its Occupant has arisen.



The Three Marys

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *On the first day of the week.* Our Saturday, the seventh day of the week, was the Jewish Sabbath. The other days the Jews distinguished only by their order, as first, second, etc. In their reckoning of time they counted a part of a day as an entire day. Jesus died on the cross on the afternoon of

Friday, and arose on Sunday morning, thus lying in the tomb three days according to their way of counting time.

1. *The stone taken away.* The door of the tomb might be rectangular and of solid stone, with a flange fitting into a socket for a hinge, both of the same material; or it might be a cylindrical stone rolling in a groove to the right or left of the opening; or there might be a regular door of stone supported by hinges against which a stone was rolled for further protection. It is not possible to say with certainty which of these methods was followed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The sealing of tombs appears to have been common throughout the East. Quite recently they have been found in Egypt, dating back to the time of the Exodus, with their seals still intact upon them.—Bissell.

5. *The linen cloths lying.* After Jesus had cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," we are told that he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. A corpse was swathed in these "grave clothes," and apparently the richer the man the more numerous the wrappings. Among the parting injunctions of a rabbi was this, "Do not multiply grave clothes upon me." In Palestine today the Mohammedans wrap their dead in this way. I have seen a tightly bound body carried on a board resting upon the shoulders of men, and in Constantinople I saw such a "bundle" left at the door of a mosque, awaiting the arrival of other dead that prayers might be said over several at once.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In the account of the raising of Lazarus, what appearance did Lazarus present when he "came forth"? What did Martha say when Jesus told her that her brother should rise? What answer did Jesus make? What place did the resurrection hold in the teaching of the Apostles (lessons of last year)? When did Peter first proclaim the good news of Christ's resurrection? What did Paul say about the resurrection in his letter to the First Corinthians? What appearances of the Risen Lord are there recorded?

The Burial of Jesus. To Golgotha came Joseph of Arimathea, a secret follower of Jesus, and removed Jesus' body from the cross, having received Pilate's permission. Nicodemus, "he who at the first came to him by night," came also with a lavish gift of a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Together they tenderly wrapped Jesus' body in linen cloths and spices according to the Jewish custom. Then they bore the body to a near-by garden and laid it in a newly-built tomb belonging to Joseph.

The Tomb Made Secure. From the Synoptists we learn that a stone was rolled against the door of the tomb and, at the request of the chief priests and Pharisees, Pilate sent a guard to seal the tomb and keep a watch. "We remember," said the Pharisees to Pilate, "that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again'; command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead'; and the last error will be worse than the first." "Go, make it as sure as you can," returned Pilate.

The Resurrection. We have no accounts of the resurrection. Matthew is the only Evangelist who speaks of the event itself, and he does so vaguely, not stating that any one saw it: "And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and become as dead men." The other Evangelists begin with the fact that the stone was rolled away.

Chronology.

Saturday, April 8. The Guard Stationed at the Tomb.

Sunday, April 9. Visit of Mary Magdalene and the Other Women to the Tomb; Mary Magdalene Hastens to Tell Peter and John; Christ's Appearance to the Other Women; Visit of Peter and John to the Tomb; Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene; the Guard Report to the Chief Priests; in the Afternoon Christ Appears to Peter (1 Cor. 15:5); Christ Appears to the Two Disciples on the Way to Emmaus; In the Evening Christ Appears to the Disciples at Jerusalem in the Absence of Thomas.

Sunday, April 16. Christ Appears to Thomas with the Other Disciples.
Later. Christ Appears to Seven Disciples by the Sea of Galilee; he
Appears to Many Disciples on a Mountain in Galilee.
Thursday, May 18. Christ's Final Appearance and Ascension from the
Mount of Olives.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"The scene is at the tomb where the body of Jesus had been laid, and also in Jerusalem where Mary told the good news of his resurrection to the disciples.

Underneath the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is shown the tomb which since the time of Constantine has been the traditional location of Christ's burial place. Very early in the Christian centuries it was deemed a sacred privilege to visit "the place where the Lord lay." When the Arabian followers of Mohammed gained possession of the Holy Land, pilgrims were still allowed to come and go, but in the eleventh century the Turks became masters of Palestine and soon all Europe was aroused over the fact that pilgrimages were no longer permitted. Then it was that the famous Crusades began, "to rescue the tomb of Christ from the infidels." Now at every Easter time Jerusalem is crowded with pilgrims, some twenty thousand being the estimated number usually gathered there from all parts of the world. Five or six hundred years ago the Mohammedans, fearing some outbreak against themselves would result at this time, devised a feast which they call that of Neby-Mousa, the Prophet Moses, and this brings every year at the same time a great crowd of Arabs and other Mohammedans.

By most modern scholars the accepted site of the entombment is the hill above Jerusalem's Grotto. See the last lesson. Here there is shown a "Garden Tomb" which, though one cannot believe it to be the very tomb, is yet so like what that tomb must have been, that the visitor who enters is satisfied. The door pictured here leads into a chamber cut in the rock, and at the right is the space where bodies were laid. One has to stoop as did Peter in order to look in.

Assign paragraphs 125 and 126 of
"In the Master's Country."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the cemetery at Hanover, Germany, I have seen a tombstone consisting of heavy slabs of granite and marble which had been cemented together and riveted with steel clasps. It marks the grave of a woman who did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, nor that she or anyone else would live again after death. In her will she ordered her grave to be made so secure that if there were a resurrection of the dead she could not be reached. On the stone these words were carved: "This burial place must never be opened!"

But a little seed chanced to lie beneath the stones. It began to grow and to try to find its way out to the light. You would not think a little growing plant could wrench those steel clasps from their sockets and burst the cemented stone slabs, but it did. That little seed has become a full-grown tree, and the great stones are fallen over to give it room.

Caiaphas and Pilate and all the enemies of Jesus thought that when he was crucified and his body laid in the tomb, and the tomb made secure, it could not be opened, but the power of God that worked through a little seed in Hanover worked in a more marvelous way to open that tomb of Jesus.



The Garden Tomb

Who first found out that the great stone placed before the entrance was rolled aside?

For Older Pupils. What were the last words of our last lesson?

"Only one day must pass away,
Only one day must intervene,
Till aching eyes behold him rise;
But O, that day—the day between!"

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I CHRIST IS RISEN

The Conqueror of Death. I can imagine when they laid our Lord in Joseph's tomb that one might have seen Death sitting over the sepulchre, saying: "I have him; he is my Victim. He said, he was 'the resurrection and the life.' Now I hold him in my cold embrace. They thought he was never going to die: but see him now. He has had to pay tribute to me." Never! The glorious morning comes, the Son of man bursts asunder the bands of Death, and rises a Conqueror, from the grave.—D. L. Moody.

The Chain of Witnesses. "Christ is risen." The choirs sing about it. The preachers proclaim it. The multitudes believe it. Does it seem strange that because a small group of sad-eyed, discouraged men and women, almost two thousand years ago, suddenly came to believe that a Man they had loved had returned to life after being executed on the cross, people should still believe it today? Nineteen centuries is a long time, and Palestine is far away. How is it that the belief of the first Christians has laid hold upon us?

It is not enough to explain it as an old tradition, handed down from generation to generation. If the experience of the apostles and the three Marys and the five hundred brethren to whom he made himself known were the only reason for keeping Easter, it is not probable that Easter would still be kept. Faith that is only handed on does not survive as this faith has survived. There must be another reason.

The other reason is that there has never been an age since the first Christian age until now when there were not among the peoples of the earth those to whom Christ had become a living person. The healing of the seamless dress has been by beds of pain. In the midst of the storm and the stress of life, despairing men and women have reached out to touch him, and they have touched him and been made whole again. Martyrs, stretched on the agonizing rack, have heard him. Other martyrs, bound among the burning fagots, have seen him in the fire. Tempted men have sought him in the hour of their temptation, and his arm has sustained them. Such as they do not need to be told that long ago, on a Sunday morning in the spring, the grave released him. They know that he is released, for he has become the living power of their lives.

When the eleven, after the tragic death of Judas, chose a twelfth apostle, they did so that he might become a witness with them of the resurrection. Since then, from all nations and tribes, a great company whom God alone can number has been added to the chain of witnesses. Daily their number is increased. Easter is Easter, not because Jesus rose long ago, but because Jesus still lives, and because there are among us those who *know* that he lives.—"Youth's Companion."

The Best Attested Fact in History. Among the reasons which have led me to this conclusion are the following:

1. The extraordinary change wrought in the disciples in the few days which intervened between the death of their Master and their going forth to proclaim him the world's Messiah.

2. The gradual change wrought in the sacred rest day of a large portion of mankind from the seventh to the first day of the week. It requires a great deal to make such a change. As the Fourth of July is a continuing witness to the Declaration of Independence, so the first day of the week is a continuing witness to the resurrection which it celebrates.

3. Christianity. Whatever may be thought by skeptics concerning Christianity, there is no doubt that it is the greatest moral force the world has ever known, and no doubt that historically it is founded upon the faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If there had not been this vital faith, Christianity would have perished in the death of its Master. It is wholly inconsistent with

the moral order of the world to believe that the greatest moral force in the world is founded on either a fraud or a delusion.

4. That Jesus Christ is a living force in the world is evident by the power which his personality is at the present day exerting. Says Harnack: "Not only in the beginning was the Word, the Word that was at once Deed and Life; but the living, resolute, indomitable Word, namely, the *person*, has always been a power in history, along with and above the power of circumstance."

Whether Jesus Christ reanimated his body nineteen centuries ago or whether he appeared to his disciples as a spirit, but so seen and realized by them that they were convinced of his continuing existence, is a question of secondary importance. The fundamental fact is that millions of men and women are today living on a higher plane and actuated by a nobler purpose because they are inspired by the spirit of him who lives in his disciples and manifests his presence by the life which he inspires in them.—Dr. Lyman Abbott, in "The Outlook."

II BECAUSE HE LIVES, WE SHALL LIVE ALSO

Lutanda. When Dan Crawford was almost home, back in Luanza, Central Africa, after a two years' absence in England and America, he wrote to a friend in Edinburgh about the last stages of his journey.

Before "dropping over" by our camp-fire, he wrote, we have a quaint "morning star password" passed round the fires. This word is "Lutanda," and it means that we who are about to sleep hereby give to each other solemn rendezvous to awake and be off with the Morning Star. Each recumbent group sends round the warning word, "Lutanda!" the Morning Star; then over they go, snoring steadily to the stars. Huddled up in somnolent attitudes, you can hear one man after another, more asleep than awake, pass it on as a solemn sort of last will and testament for the day—"Lutanda!" What a picture of all who fall asleep in Jesus! They, too, rest from their labors with that word on their lips; they, too, will rise with the Morning Star!

Triumphant Notes. A soldier was being taken to his resting place in the old churchyard. His comrades followed him to the last home, while the band wailed forth the dirge of one of Beethoven's funeral marches. To the hill-top came the slow beat of the drum and the wild sorrow of the music. As one felt its pathos there came a catch in the throat, and the tears welled up. So soon the farewells come! No wonder the music sobbed and moaned, and the death bell mingled with the beat of the big drum, and a hush fell upon the onlookers. But suddenly the music passed into the major key, and a strain of exquisite melody suggested that even in death there is hope, and that more enduring than life is the love upon which it rests. The great genius could not compose a funeral march wholly compact of sorrow and longing. That is but half the truth. There blends with every mourner's sigh the triumphant note of the first Easter morning. Jesus lives!—From an Editorial in "The Sunday School Chronicle."

At Home with the Lord. We should get here a lesson of comfort for our own hearts when we stand by the graves of our Christian dead. The body of our loved one may be in the grave, but the friend we knew and loved is not there—he is with his Lord. Speaking of believers who are departed, St. Paul says they are "Absent from the body," "at home with the Lord." You go to an old house where your friend used to live. You knock, but get no answer. The house is empty. Then you find that your friend has moved to a new house, a larger and better one, on the hill. You stand by the form of your dead and speak, but get no answer. The house of clay is empty. Your friend is not there—he is absent, he has gone away. Where is he? He has moved out of the old house and is now "at home with the Lord." That is the story of Christian death. It is life, not death.—J. R. Miller, in "Devotional Hours with the Bible."

So Also is the Resurrection of the Dead.

O little bulb, uncouth,
Ragged, and rusty brown,
Have you some dew of youth?
Have you a crimson gown?

Plant me and see
What I shall be,—
God's fine surprise
Before your eyes!

A body wearing out,
A crumbling house of clay!
O agony of doubt
And darkness and dismay!
Trust God and see
What I shall be,—
His best surprise
Before your eyes!

—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Thou Art Immortal; Live as One of the Immortals. The theme of the first Christian preachers was the resurrection and all its consequences. Life suddenly revealed itself to them in a glory that took their breath away and smote them to their knees in awe and rapture. For they knew themselves now as "immortals" and the splendor of the destiny humbled and exalted them. You remember the famous king who appointed a man to say ever to him, "Philip, thou art mortal," lest an unworthy pride should be his undoing. But henceforth the pilgrim Church was to whisper in the ear of Humanity, "Man, thou art immortal; live as one of the immortals, and may a noble pride in thy origin and thy destiny save thee from baseness and dishonor."—Charles Silvester Horne, in "The Romance of Preaching."

III GO TELL MY BRETHREN

The Good News Must be Told. "Do not allow the resurrection story and the resurrection message to become dissociated. The resurrection story is the most joyous that ever was told. The resurrection message declares that life eternal is for every man. Study the stories of Jesus' interviews with his disciples after the resurrection, and you will find that he talked about nothing else but spiritual power for world evangelization. Luke sums it all up in one sentence in Acts 1.3. The story must be told."

I say to all men, far and near,
That he is risen again;
That he is with us now and here
And ever will remain.

And what I say, let each this morn
Go tell it to his friend,
That soon in every place shall dawn
His kingdom without end.

—Hardenberg.

How a Hindu Fakir Learned the Good News of the Living Savior. A Hindu holy fakir with matted hair and ash-besmeared body was sitting in deep meditation beneath a tree, when he saw a torn leaf from a New Testament. Reading it, strange thoughts entered his hungry soul—they seemed "to take him by the hand and lead him straight to the Father." He sought out a man to teach him of this wonderful Book, and his guide was an Englishman who wore a black crape on his sleeve. Supposing it to be the mark of a Christian, he placed a similar one on his own arm. Later, he entered into a Christian church to hear its truths expounded. At the close of the service he announced that he, too, was a believer, and pointed to his crape-bedecked arm in proof thereof. When told that the band was an English sign of the death of some friend, the fakir thought a moment, and then said: "But I read in the Book that my loved One has died; so I shall wear it in memory of him." Later still, he grasped the idea of the resurrection, and then realized that his "loved One" was alive forevermore. Thereupon a great joy filled his heart, and the light of the resurrection shone in his face; that, henceforth, was his sign of discipleship.—"The Christian."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. One thing is certain: this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished and there is a life eternal.—Harnack.

Verse 8. I thank thee, O Father, that there is a voice within me which contradicts the silence of death.—George Matheson.

Verse 8. The best answer any one of us can make when questioned for proof of the resurrection of the Lord is the humble, but irrefutable, one: "Christ liveth in me."—J. Stuart Holden.

Verse 16.

"He is not here, for he is risen!" Lord,
Make thyself known, and call me by my name,
As thou didst speak to Mary with a word,
Thyself, thy very self, yet not the same.

—H. Jeffs.

Verse 16. That is the great thing, that Jesus is a living Savior, and therefore still with us; yet thousands who confess his name do not realize that, and thousands of those who at heart believe it still do not act upon it.—Edward Everett Hale, Jr.

Verse 17. The question of Jesus to Mary implied that her weeping was due to her ignorance of a blessed fact that would have made it useless; and my weeping at the grave of lost joys, or lost hopes, or lost ambitions may often be the same ignorant and useless thing.—G. H. Knight.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The resurrection of Christ proves that the cross was not a calamity which he could not avoid, but a cup which he willingly drained; it reveals him as the Son of God; it assures us that he is not now a memory but a Living Presence; it brings life and immortality to light, it comforts us with the faith that death is not the end of the soul but the gateway through which the soul passes into its larger life.

At the end of this chapter John tells us that "these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name." Has your six months' study of his Gospel had this result? Ask yourself the question which Browning asks in "Christmas Eve and Easter Day":

One thing
Remained, however—one that tasked
My soul to answer; and I asked
Fairly and frankly, what might be
That History, that Faith, to me?

Has your belief in the Risen Lord affected your life? Has your faith that because he lives you will live also borne fruit in the kind of life you are now living? Or do you live as though there were no connection between this present life and the life to come, as though you had no certainty that your character here determined your destiny hereafter?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Our Lord's own references to his coming resurrection, and the place of the resurrection in the teaching of the disciples. See "Now is Christ Risen from the Dead," in "The Outlook," for April 14, 1915.

2. How women today are making known the resurrection message. "This lesson should come home with special power to the hearts of Christian women, for to women was first given on Easter morning the commission to go and tell that Christ was risen."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Assign whatever written work you wish to have brought to class in review of the quarter's work. In Note-Book let XXII be written: "The Risen Lord."

REVIEW. THE PURPOSE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

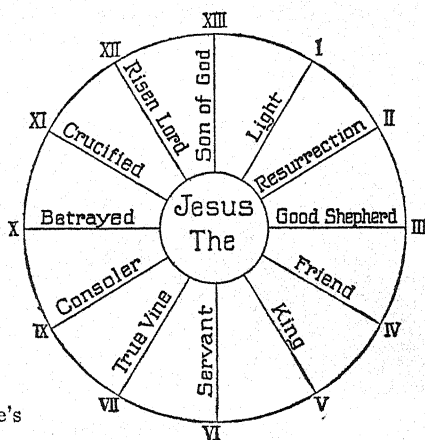
Golden Text

These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name. John 20.31

READ John 21.15-25

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

- I. **L**ight of the World
Sight to the Blind
- II. **R**esurrection, **L**ife
Raising of **L**azarus
- III. **S**eeking **S**traying
Shepherd **S**heep
- IV. **J**esus **A**nointed
Judas **A**ngered
- V. **C**hrist is **K**ing
Crowds are **K**ind
- VI. The **H**onored **S**avior
Humble **S**ervant
- VII. **V**irile **B**ending
Vine **B**ranches
- IX. The **S**avior's **P**romise
Spirit's **P**ower
- X. A **T**reacherous **A** Disciple's
Traitor **A** Denial
- XI. The **C**rucified **T**he **R**ighteous
Christ **C**hrist **R**edeemer
- XII. The **R**isen **T**he **L**iving
Redeemer **L**ord



A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

For a written review, copy each quotation below on a separate sheet of paper, as many of each as there are pupils in your class, and give one to each pupil. After he has written a brief account of the lesson to which the quotation alludes, let him have another quotation.

As an oral review much interest will be aroused by letting all who recognize the allusion signify this after the reading of each quotation. Call for the statement.

Separate from Christ, the individual shrivels, and the possibilities of fair buds wither and set into no fruit.—Alexander Maclaren.

“‘He is not here!’ On the victorious brow
There shines the crown of him who sealed Death’s doom.”

Let us by consecrated watching, maintain the attitude of advancement, and so, line upon line, precept upon precept, as we are able to bear, he will lead us on, until we come to the perfect light and life and love of God.—Campbell Morgan.

“I asked Chalmers to come and see me in the autumn, and he answered, ‘The night cometh,’ somewhat sadly, and I gathered from these words that he had a presage that his days were few.”

Father omnipotent!
Son, the Life-Giver!
Spirit, the Comforter!
Worthy at all times
Of worship and wonder! —Longfellow.

He who stooped to heal a mother's sorrow, to comfort her heart with the assurance that she was not forgotten, stooped to heal the sorrows of a universe, and to make it clear to all that they were not forgotten.—W. M. Clow.

Our Lord and Master,
When he departed, left us in his will,
As our best legacy on earth, the poor!
These we have always with us; had we not,
Our hearts would grow as hard as are these stones.
—Longfellow.

"If the voice of Christ is to a man as the voice of a stranger, it is because he does not belong to Christ's fold."

He is the Light Divine, whose rays
Across the thousand years unspent
Shine through the darkness of our days. —Longfellow.

We may be sure that we are becoming smaller when we begin to disparage humble services. When a man begins to despise the "towel" he is losing his kingly dignity, and is resigning his place on the throne.—J. H. Jowett.

Where it listeth, there it bloweth;
We hear the sound, and no man knoweth
Whence it cometh or whither it goeth,
And thus it is with the Holy Spirit. —Longfellow.

High over the back of the speakers' platform, facing the great audience, were the words of the Convention Motto, in electric light, "We Would See Jesus."

He, only, is the despicable one
Who lightly sells his honor as a shield
For fawning knaves, to hide them from the sun;—
Too nice for crime, yet, coward, he doth yield
For crime a shelter. Swift to Paradise
The contrite thief, not Judas with his price!
—Richard Watson Gilder.

When Abraham Lincoln, in the December after his election, was preparing his first inaugural address, he wrote to one of his friends, "I am in the Garden of Gethsemane."

"How many have been brought to realize their mistake, and have become conscious that all the time, standing by their side, was the Christ, waiting to share their sorrow and suffering! And then they have cried, 'Rabboni-Master!'"

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. In what house was Jesus often welcomed? 2. How did Jesus prove his power over death? 3. How did Mary show her gratitude and love for Jesus and why did Judas object to her deed? 4. Who is the Good Shepherd, who are the sheep, and what does he do for them? 5. After he had washed his disciples' feet, what did Jesus tell them he had done and what did his words mean? 6. Who betrayed Jesus to his enemies? 7. What made Peter deny Jesus? 8. How did Jesus die? 9. How did he show his love for his mother when he was dying? 10. What took place on the third day after his death?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Through what stages did the blind man's faith in Jesus pass? 2. What revelations of himself did Jesus make in his words about the Good Shepherd? 3. What did Jesus teach about the relation of his followers to himself in his words about the Vine and its Branches? 4. How did Jesus teach a lesson upon humility? 5. What effect had the raising of Lazarus upon the people and upon

the Jewish authorities? 6. In what ways did the entry into Jerusalem fulfil ancient prophecies? 7. Why has the Holy Spirit come and what is his work? 8. What traits of character are shown by Peter in three of our lessons? 9. In what respects is Judas' betrayal more despicable than Pilate's condemnation? 10. What are the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus? 11. Robert Hichens, in his book upon "The Holy Land," writes that "Bethany is overlooked by a Russian Church where it is said that Mary met her Lord and begged him to come to Lazarus." What mistakes does he make in this statement? 12: Giles Fletcher has the following stanza about "The Sufficiency of Christ." Which of his statements have been illustrated in our lessons?

He is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, he is bread;
If any be a bondman, he is free;
If any be but weak, how strong is he!
To dead men, life is he; to sick men, health;
To blind men, sight; and to the needy, wealth;
A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth.

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1. What reasons have we for believing that John wrote the Fourth Gospel?
2. Why did he write it? 3. In what ways does it differ from the first three Gospels? 4. How does it supplement them? 5. What does it omit which they give? 6. Of what period of Jesus' life does John alone give an account? 7. What great discourses does he alone record? 8. What else does he give which the Synoptists omit? 9. Give an outline of the Gospel. 10. Why are miracles called "signs" here? 11. How many "signs" does John record? 12. Which miracle is recorded in all the Gospels, and why does John record it? 13. What two allegories has this Gospel? 14. Why does John record so fully Jesus' last words to his disciples? 15. What are the literary peculiarities and beauties of this Gospel? 16. What are its lessons for today?

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Before class-time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture should be covered with paper attached at the top so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls. Or, copy the pictures by tracing on thin paper and paste the copies on twelve cards; let the pupils write the stories beneath the pictures.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

After picturing the scene of each lesson, let the pupils give the title and Golden Text and answer a few questions in regard to it.

I. On the steps of a great building a beggar is sitting, and men who are passing by suddenly stop before him. One of the men puts his hands on the beggar's eyes. Now the beggar is hurrying away.

II. Here there are two scenes. In the first one, a weeping woman has thrown herself on the ground at the feet of a Man. Many people are standing in groups near by. In the second scene, this Man is pointing to a strange looking figure who stands at the entrance of a tomb, and all the people are gazing at him in amazement.





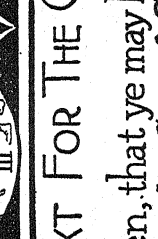

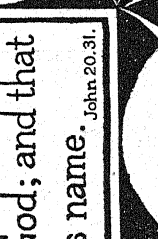
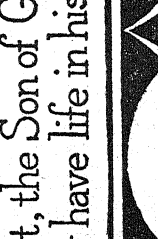

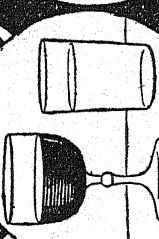
III. A Man is talking to a large crowd of people. I can see flocks of sheep being driven to the Temple at Jerusalem, and it is about sheep that this Man is talking so earnestly.

IV. This is a joyous supper scene. A woman is busily waiting upon the people. Another woman is pouring something over the feet of one of the guests. There is a man near by who points to her as he talks with other men.

V. Here we have a still more joyous scene. The central Figure is that of a Man riding an animal, and before him people are throwing branches on the ground.

VI. Twelve men are reclining at supper, and one Man, who has a towel fastened to his girdle, is pouring water over the feet of one of the men.

VII. Eleven of the men whom we saw in the last scene are looking very thoughtfully at the one Man who is talking earnestly. I catch the words "vine" and "branches."

 <p>HOSANNA V</p>	 <p>GREATNESS THROUGH SERVICE VI</p>	 <p>VII</p>
 <p>MARY MARTHA LAZARUS IV</p>	<p>GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name. <small>John 20:31.</small></p>	 <p>VIII</p>
 <p>I AM THE RESURRECTION II</p>	 <p>THE HOLY SPIRIT IX</p>	 <p>X</p>
 <p>CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS XI</p>	 <p>XII</p>	

VIII. A man whom we have not seen in our other lessons is talking to a large crowd. He is very emphatic, and some of the men seem to be mocking him. "Woe" and "strong drink" are words that I hear.

IX. Here we see the same Speaker whom we saw in all the other lessons except the last one. He is telling a group of men that he must leave them, but he promises to send some One to take his place.

X. It is midnight in a garden. Soldiers with lanterns and torches and weapons surround a group of men. All are looking intently at one Man, who stands out in front of the others and is speaking to them. The scene changes to the open court of a large building where several men are gathered around a fire.

XI. Here there are crosses to which three men have been fastened. Now the body of the One who had hung in the center has been taken down, and two men are carefully wrapping it in clothes and spices, and are tenderly laying it down in a tomb.

XII. Two men are walking together when a woman, greatly excited, runs toward them and tells them something. Now the men are entering a tomb. Now a weeping woman turns quickly as a Man utters her name.

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verse which:

1. Speaks of Jesus as the Light.
2. Speaks of Jesus as the Resurrection.
3. Speaks of Jesus as the Door.
4. Speaks of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.
5. Gives Martha's confession of faith in Jesus.
6. Declares that Jesus knows his own.
7. Affirms Jesus' universal dominion.
8. Affirms that Jesus voluntarily gave up his life.
9. Begins: I am the door; by me if.
10. Begins: I came that they may have.
11. Begins: The poor ye have.
12. Begins: Hosanna.
13. Begins: Ye call me Teacher.
14. Gives the reason why the Father loves Jesus.
15. Gives Judas' objections to Mary's deed of love.
16. Gives the Pharisees' words about the power of Jesus.
17. Speaks of an act of Jesus as an example.
18. Tells of the greatest love one can show.
19. Gives Jesus' commandment.
20. Tells why one should abide in Jesus.
21. Explains why it was best for Jesus to leave his disciples.
22. Tells what the Holy Spirit does.
23. Shows Jesus' special care for his disciples.
24. Speaks of Jesus' coming death as a "cup."

Repeat:

Jn. 9.4;
Jn. 13.15;

Jn. 11.25;
Jn. 15.1-13;

Jn. 10.7-18;
Jn. 16.7-14.

Give the chapter and verse number of these words of Jesus:

We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father.

Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.

Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.

Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.

The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

A REVIEW CONTEST

Let two classes unite for this review, each with a leader. Let the teacher of Class A ask the questions, and the teacher of Class B keep the record. Class A is asked the first question, and all who think that they can answer hold up their hands. The leader of Class A decides who shall answer. The teacher who is judge then writes a credit or a debit mark for Class A. If the answer is wrong, the question is then given to Class B. The second question is given first to Class B, the third to Class A, and so on. Questions should all be such as can be answered in a word or two. Space does not permit a full set of questions here, but teachers can easily prepare in advance a sufficiently long list.

1. After his resurrection, whom did Jesus call by name? 2. Who betrayed Jesus? 3. Where was Jesus anointed? 4. What did the crowd cry when Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem? 5. What lesson did Jesus teach by the washing of his disciples' feet? 6. Where was Jesus crucified? 7. How did Peter deny his Lord? 8. Whom did Jesus say he would send after his departure from earth? 9. What is the title of the lesson whose Golden Text is "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life"?

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. Why do Christians Believe in Jesus as the Christ?
2. The Friendships of Jesus.
3. The Claims of Jesus.
4. The Conversations of John's Gospel.
5. Jesus' Methods with Individuals.
6. The Last Discourse of Jesus.
7. The Six Trials of Jesus and Their Illegality.
8. The Events and Discourses of Passion Week.
9. The Differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. When was the Kingdom of Israel divided, and why? 2. Who were the most important kings of Judah previous to Uzziah? 3. How long did Uzziah reign? 4. Of what sin was Uzziah guilty and how was he punished? 5. Why did Uzziah's death seem to Isaiah a great calamity? (*Guide*, p. 248.) 6. Who was Isaiah? (*Guide*, p. 36.) 7. What does "twain" mean? 8. What did Job say when he thought of God's greatness? (Job 42.5-6.) 9. What words of Peter as he compared himself with his Lord do Isaiah's words in verse 5 recall? (Lk. 5.8.) 10. What words did Jesus quote from this chapter of Isaiah, and for what purpose? (Mt. 13.14-15.) 11. How does John refer the same words to the work of his Lord? (Jn. 12.37-41.)

Questions to Think About. How do you think that Isaiah "saw" God? (*Guide*, p. 244.) 2. How do you think he heard God speak to him? (*Guide*, p. 251.) 3. Of what are the first four verses a vision? 4. The fifth verse? 5. Verses 6 and 7? 6. Verses 8-13? 7. What is the meaning of "holy"? 8. How does Isaiah appear to himself in verse 5? 9. What has given him this knowledge of himself? 10. Why is the imperative used here? (*Guide*, p. 246.) 11. Explain verse 10. (*Guide*, p. 246.) 12. What is the meaning of verse 13? (*Guide*, p. 246.) 13. What is the finest verse in the lesson? 14. Was God any nearer to Jerusalem in Isaiah's day than he is to New York today? 15. Can we see and know God? 16. What do we mean by "seeing and knowing" God? 17. What great men of the Bible were especially commissioned by God for a great work? 18. Who are today doing a great work for God? 19. What does God ask of every Christian? 20. What service for God can our class render? 21. Do you sometimes say, "Why should I do it?" when your question ought to be "Why should I not do it?" 22. "What possible good can come from a study of the sixth chapter of Isaiah?" a critic of the Sunday-school Lesson scheme once asked: what is your answer?

THIRD QUARTER

LESSON I—JULY 1

ISAIAH'S CALL TO HEROIC SERVICE

Golden Text

And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. Isaiah 6:8

LESSON Isaiah 6 MEMORIZE verses 6-8

1 In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. 8 And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed. 11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, 12 and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land. 13 And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

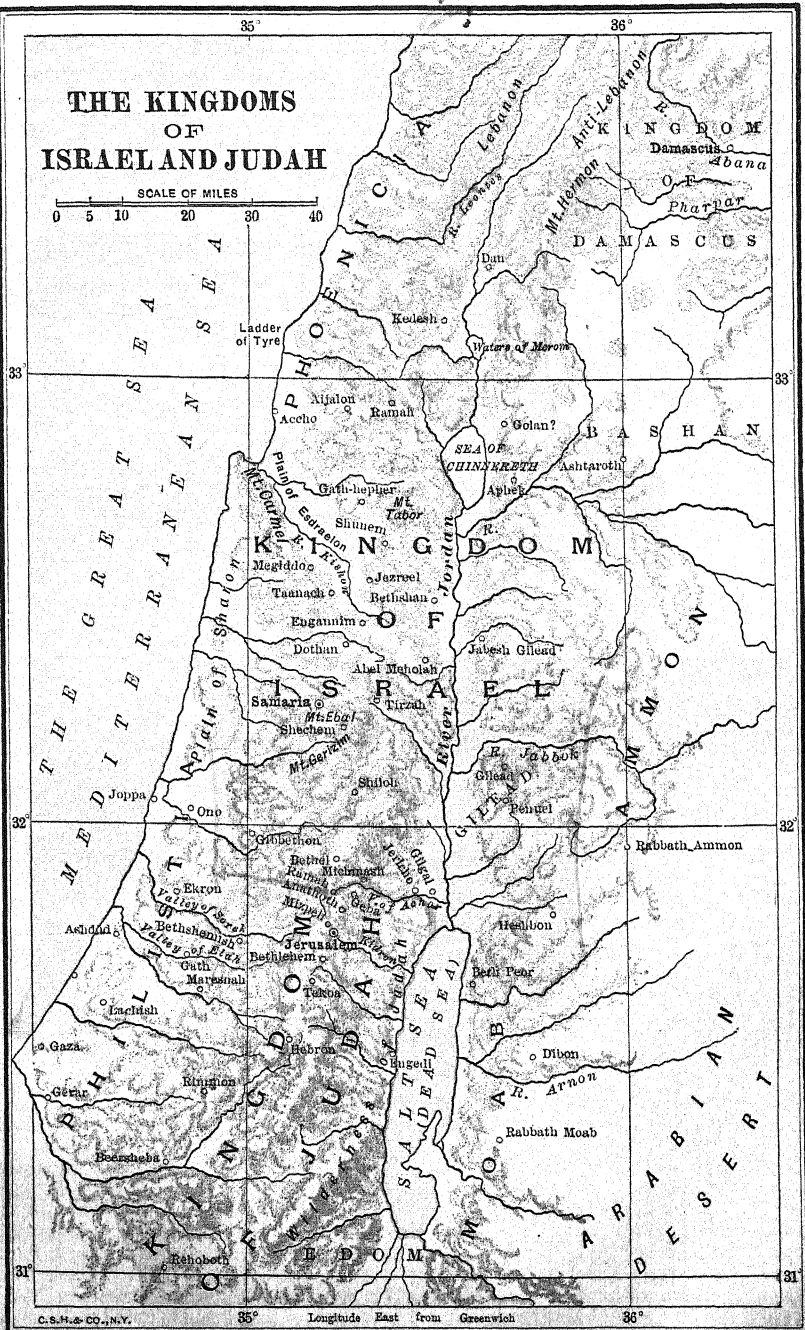
THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. A Vision of Sincerity, 1-4.
- II. A Vision of Sin, 5.
- III. A Vision of Salvation, 6-7.
- IV. A Vision of Serving, 8-13.

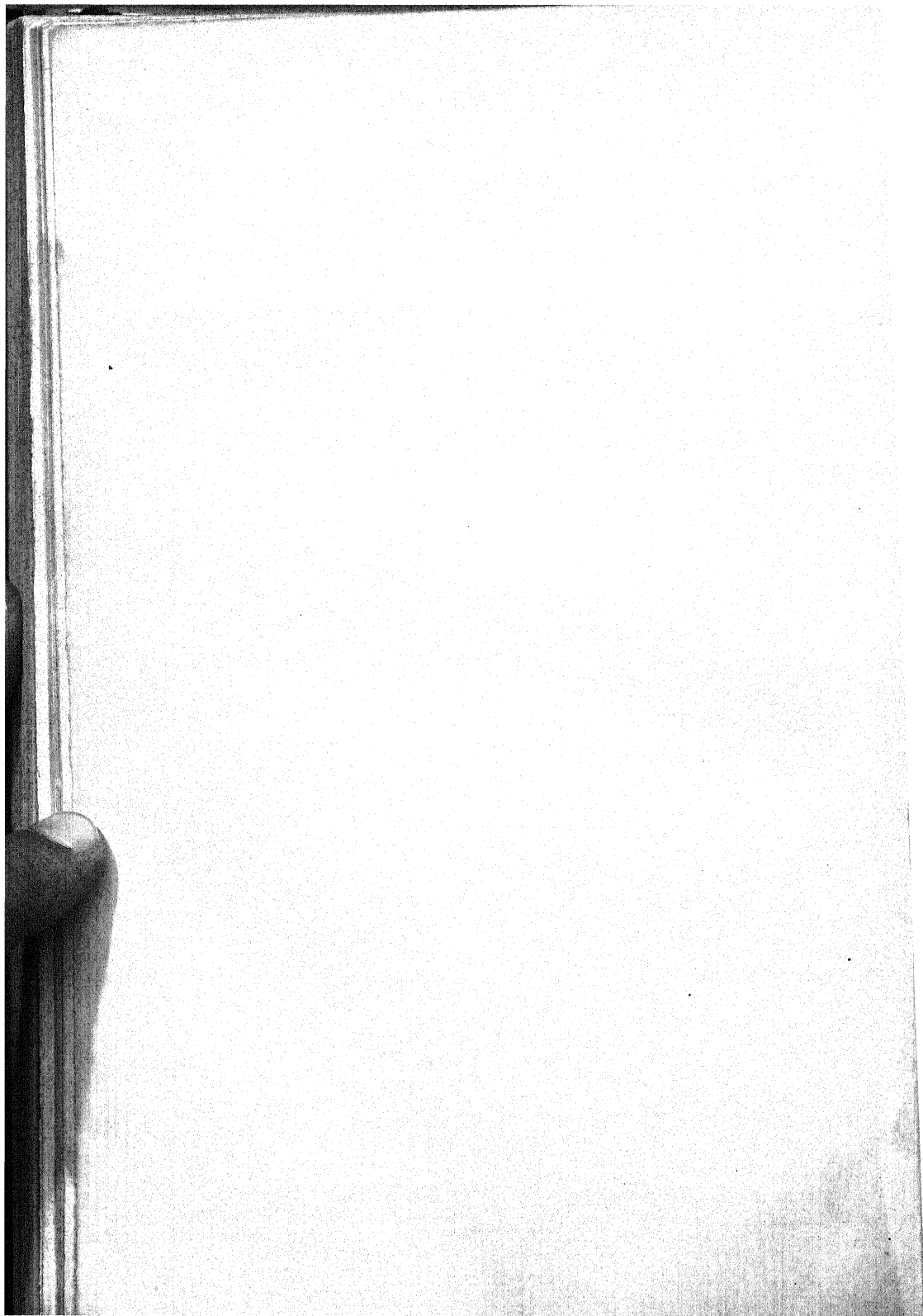
1. *In the year that King Uzziah died.* See the Historical Background. "This is more than a date: this is an experience" (George Adam Smith). This remark shows that, though the vision occurred in this year, the account was not written till some time afterward.—*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne.* "No man hath seen God at any time," says John in the Prologue to his Gospel, our first lesson of the year. Either Isaiah had a vision—perhaps a dream—so vivid that he seemed to be in the very presence of God, or else what he here describes was a purely spiritual experience which could be expressed to others in no other way than as a vision. Delitzsch says: "God gave him while awake a look into the invisible world, by opening within him the inner sense for the supersensible." "The conception of his vision is singularly pure and lofty. It is a worshiper's thoughts when he draws near to God. The vision is but the service in the Temple transfigured. The prophet fell into a trance while beholding the service and musing on its meaning. Suddenly the house and service and the ministers became transfigured; the walls went apart, and the roof lifted itself up till it seemed the high dome of

SCALE OF MILES

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God's palace on high under which he stood, and the Lord the King sat upon his throne receiving the adoration of all holy beings" (A. B. Davidson).—*His train filled the temple.* Or, *skirts*, RVm.

No face; only the sight
Of a sweeping garment vast and white
With a heaven that I could recognize.

—Browning.

2. *Above him.* Above for his service, explains the Targum. *Around him,* is another translation.—*The seraphim.* Nowhere else are seraphim spoken of as angelic beings. The Hebrew word means "the burning ones." Compare Ezek! 1.13-14. "They are not angels, they are rather the expressions of the forces of the universe waiting there beside the throne of God; they are titanic beings in whom is embodied everything of strength and obedience which anywhere in any of the worlds of God is doing his will" (Phillips Brooks).—*With twain.* With two wings.—*He covered his face.* Reverently, for he is neither able nor worthy to look upon God.—*He covered his feet.* Humbly, for in that sacred presence he is overwhelmed with the sense of his unworthiness.—*With twain he did fly.* Eagerly, in the service of the Lord.

3. *One cried unto another.* They kept crying, in antiphonal song, the one crying, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts," and the other choir responding "the whole earth is full of his glory."—*Holy.* "Holy means separate, austere, high, lifted above all human infirmity and all human sin. Holy means that before which the spirit bows in awe and utter reverence and complete self-abasement" (Selbie).—*The whole earth is full of his glory.* Or, *the fulness of the whole earth is his glory*, RVm. "The seraphim were all wings and voice, perfect readiness of praise and service" (Smith).

4. *The foundations of the thresholds shook.* "The building was seized, as it were, with devout awe" (Delitzsch).—*The house was filled with smoke.* "No wonder the prophet felt the polluted threshold rock beneath him, or that, as where fire and water mingle, there should be the rising of a great smoke. For the smoke is the mist which ever arises where holiness and sin touch each other. What Isaiah actually felt was the dim-eyed shame, the distraction, the embarrassment, the blinding shock of a personal encounter with One whom he was utterly unfit to meet" (Smith).

5. *Woe is me! for I am undone.* God's holiness and glory make Isaiah conscious of his own weakness.—*I am a man of unclean lips.* Recall Peter's remark, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Lk. 5.8, as he compared himself with his Master. Isaiah hears the seraphim praising Jehovah and becomes at once conscious that his lips (his nature) are unfit to join in the song.—*A people of unclean lips.* Their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, Isa. 3.8.—*For mine eyes have seen the king.* Another reason for exclaiming "Woe is me!" "Who is able to stand before Jehovah, this holy God?" 1 S. 6.20; Ex. 33.20.

6. *A live coal.* Or, *hot stone*, RVm. Fire is a symbol and an agent of purification, and with it Isaiah's lips are purged, v. 7.—*From off the altar.* Where the fire is never extinguished, the heavenly altar being modeled like that of the Temple.

7. *Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.* "Instead of laying his guilt in the shape of some victim on the altar, Isaiah, with a keener sense of its inseparableness from himself, presents it to God upon his own lips. Instead of being satisfied with beholding the fire of God consume it on another body than his own, at a distance from himself, he feels that fire visit the very threshold of his nature where he had gathered the guilt, and consume it there. It is a replica of the fifty-first Psalm: 'For thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it; thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' This my sacrifice, my sense of guilt gathered here upon my lips: my 'broken and contrite heart,' who feel myself undone before thee, 'Lord, thou wilt not despise.' Nearly eight centuries before there was accomplished upon Calvary that Divine Sacrifice for sin, which abrogated a rite of expiation, hitherto universally adopted by the conscience of humanity, we find a Jew, in the dispensation where such a rite was most religiously enforced, trembling under the conviction of sin, and upon a floor crowded with suggestions of physical sacrifice; yet the only sacrifice he offers is the pure spiritual one of confession. It is most notable. Look at it from

a human point of view, and we can estimate Isaiah's immense spiritual originality; look at it from a Divine, and we cannot help perceiving a distinct foreshadow of what was to take place by the blood of Jesus under the new covenant" (Smith).

8. *Whom shall I send.* This is the purpose of the vision. See p. 251.

9. *Tell this people.* The people of Judah.—*Hear ye indeed.* Or, *hear ye continually*, RVm.—*But understand not.* "This people" would listen to the prophet but were not capable of understanding him.

10. *Make . . . shut.* "It is the fashion of the prophet's grammar, when it would state a principal or necessary effect, to put it in the form of a command."—*Make the heart of this people fat.* Compare Ps. 119:70: "Their heart is as fat as grease, but I delight in thy law." The "heart" here includes understanding, and a "fat heart" is a callous heart, a dull understanding.—*Make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes.* It was after many years of preaching that Isaiah here reviewed his call to God's services, and into that call he wove the conviction that his warnings and appeals were destined to fall upon unheeding ears—a conviction forced upon him by the failure of his people either to listen to or to apprehend the spiritual truths he had revealed. Scripture writers think of God as the first cause of all things: compare Prov. 16:4: "Jehovah hath made everything for its own end, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." The result is represented as God's object in sending him. Compare Jesus' words about his purpose in using parables, Mt. 13:13, and about the result of his coming, Jn. 3:19.—*Lest they see . . . be healed.* Recall Jesus' repetition of these words in Mt. 13:14-15.—"Probably never did man receive so awful a commission as Isaiah describes himself to have received. Not that we are to suppose that this fell upon him all at once, in the suddenness and distinctness with which he records it. He became aware of it through a prolonged process of disillusion. No prophet, we may be sure, would be asked by God to go and tell his audiences that in so many words at the beginning of his career. It is only by experience that a man understands that kind of commission. But why does he place it upon the lips of God, as they give him his commission? Because Isaiah is stating not merely his own singular experience, but a truth always true of the preaching of the word of God, and of which no prophet at the time of his consecration to the ministry can be without at least a foreboding" (George Adam Smith).

11. *How long?* Surely thou wilt not cast off thy chosen people forever? This breathes the spirit of one who, having realized life as a mission, has made the much more rare recognition that the logical consequence is neither the promise of success nor the assurance of sympathy, but simply the acceptance of duty, with whatever results and under whatever skies it pleases God to bring over him" (Smith). Compare Moses' words in Ex. 32:11-13, and Ps. 79:5.—*Until . . . waste.* Until judgment has been meted out to the present people as a nation.

12. *And Jehovah have removed men far away.* A reference to the Assyrian policy of removing conquered nations from their home.

13. *And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up.* Or, *But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten up*, RVm.—*Eaten up.* Or, *burnt*, RVm.—*A terebinth and an oak.* "These trees with which a multitude of associations from the early times of Israel were connected (Gen. 12:6) have, like the beech and the olive, the property of renewing themselves again from the root-stumps even when their trunk has been felled" (Delitzsch).—*Whose stock remaineth when they are felled.* Or, *whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves*, RVm. For as there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease (Job 13:7), so there is hope of Israel, that in the ruined nation the principle of vitality will not be consumed and from it a new Israel will spring. "This is the bright side of the judgment by which Isaiah constantly relieves the general gloom of his preaching. It presents an outline of the history of Israel to the end of time. Israel as a people is imperishable in virtue of Divine promise; but the mass of the people is henceforth destined for destruction in virtue of a Divine decision, and only a remnant which is converted will finally propagate Israel's prerogative as a people and inherit the glorious future" (Delitzsch).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What lesson from Isaiah did we have last quarter? What figures of speech do you recall from that lesson? What quotation from Isaiah did we have in the second lesson of the year? How did Paul's call to service come? (A lesson of last year.) When Paul at Troas had his vision of a man of Macedonia, what response did he make to the vision? (A lesson of last year.) How did Philip receive his call to work? What vision did Peter have at Joppa and how was he obedient to the vision? (A lesson of last year.)

A Rapid Survey of the Kingdom of Judah from the Time of Solomon. Our lessons for the rest of the year take us back to the Old Testament. They follow the history of Judah from the time of Uzziah to the Captivity and through the return and reestablishment under Ezra and Nehemiah. Let us get our bearings by briefly recalling Judah's history.

The Division of the Kingdom. The United Kingdom built up by David and Solomon was divided on Solomon's death. Solomon's son Rehoboam succeeded to his throne, but when the latter refused to lessen the burdens of the people and threatened rather to increase them, the ten northern tribes withdrew and founded a new kingdom, the Kingdom of Israel, with Jeroboam as their king.

Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa. The tribe of Judah remained loyal to Rehoboam. After his death his son Abijah reigned for a short time and was succeeded by his son Asa. Asa had a long and at first a very good and prosperous reign. He abolished idol worship and restored the worship of the Temple. In his last years he was rebuked by the prophet Hanani for lack of trust in Jehovah.

Jehoshaphat and Jehoram. Jehoshaphat followed his father as king of Judah. He was one of the best of Judah's kings. Not only did he himself obey God's commandments, but he abolished idolatrous places of worship and sent out teachers throughout the kingdom to teach the book of the law. His second great reform measure was the appointing of judges in the cities and a court of appeals at Jerusalem. Full of riches and honor, he died after reigning twenty-five years and Jehoram his son, who had reigned with his father during his later years, became sole ruler. Jehoram "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, for he had the daughter of Ahab (Athaliah) to wife." Trouble came fast upon him. Edom and Libnah revolted from his rule, the Philistines and Arabians invaded the land and took away all his sons save the youngest, Ahaziah. He died from a terrible disease, unhonored and unwept, "departing without being desired."

Ahaziah and Athaliah. Ahaziah, Jehoram's son, reigned in his stead. "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother (Athaliah) was his counselor to do wickedly." He died at the hands of Jehu, after reigning less than a year. Then Athaliah destroyed, as she thought, "all the seed royal of the house of Judah" and usurped the throne. Her reign was the only break in the history of Judah in the succession of kings of the house of David. Six years she reigned, ignorant of the fact that her plans had been frustrated by Jehosheba, Ahaziah's sister, and her husband, Jehoiada, the priest. They had hidden away Joash, one of Ahaziah's sons, and in the seventh year of her reign they brought him forth and had him proclaimed king. "Treason! treason!" cried Athaliah when she heard the shouts and rushing to the Temple beheld the young king standing by the altar. But her voice was quickly silenced, for when she had gone beyond the Temple precincts she was slain.

Joash and Amaziah. Joash reigned forty years, and as long as Jehoiada the priest lived, he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. Planning for the rebuilding of the Temple occupied many years of his reign. After the death of Jehoiada Joash permitted idolatry to flourish, and when the Syrians invaded the land and captured Gath, he bought them off from attacking Jerusalem by a gift of "the hallowed things" of the Temple. His end followed soon after, for his own servants murdered him in his bed. Amaziah, his son, conquered the Edomites, and brought back their idols and worshiped them. He challenged, and was defeated by Joash, king of Israel, who broke down the walls of Jerusalem and despoiled the Temple of its treasures. A conspiracy was raised against Amaziah and he was assassinated.

Uzziah. Then Amaziah's sixteen-year-old son Uzziah was placed on the throne, and he reigned for fifty-two years. He "set himself to seek Jehovah" and God made him to prosper. His name spread far abroad, for he was a master of statecraft and diplomacy, and was successful in the arts of both war and peace. He had walled cities and big armies and much wealth. But he could not stand prosperity. "He was marvelously helped till he was strong, but when he was strong his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly." He was guilty of the presumptuous sin of usurping the place of the priest and entering the Holy of Holies to burn incense; swiftly came judgment upon him. Leprosy broke out on his forehead, and till his death he lived apart from others, a leper, and Jotham his son came to the throne.

Isaiah's Fears at the Death of Uzziah. Could Uzziah's son, who lacked his father's ability and energy, rule wisely at this time of crisis? The prophet Isaiah, though a young man at Uzziah's death, could see the corruption at home and also the distant war-clouds, big with dread, that were threatening the life of the nation, for Judah lay in the path of the Assyrian king, Tilgath-pilneser III, who was beginning to conquer the western world. Isaiah may well have been tortured with fear, but like all others when at the lowest ebb of human things, his heart was ready to hear what God had to say to him. In the quiet Temple the great vision came to him and his fears took flight, for he learned that whoever the earthly ruler might be, Judah's real king was Jehovah. "He lost a hero, and he found the Lord. He feared because a great pillar had fallen: and he found the Pillar of the universe. He thought everything would topple into disaster, and lo, he felt the strength of the everlasting arms." For Isaiah see page 36 of our Introduction.

The Book of Isaiah. See pp. 35-39 of our Introduction.

The Sixth Chapter of Isaiah. Professor Kent, in "The Kings and Prophets of Israel," points out that "this marvelous sixth chapter reflects the entire gamut of Isaiah's experiences; his youthful struggles with the sense of personal responsibility; his strong, enlightened patriotism, his keen insight, and that transcendent vision of Jehovah's majesty and holiness which never faded from the prophet's memory. The chapter also suggests those long years of opposition and discouragement, the folly of king and people in rejecting his sane counsels, the disasters that overtook Judah at the hands of the Assyrian conquerors, and, above all, that deathless hope in the future of his race and in the goodness of Jehovah which never failed Isaiah in his half century of tireless activity."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The man or woman who consents to take a Sunday-school class or to hold office in the church school, by that act issues a call to his own soul to live on a higher plane than ever before, and to demand of himself the honest answer to higher ideals than those that command the lives of his fellows. This willingness and determination to respond to the highest call is characteristic of the majority of teachers, but here and there one finds those who do not hear the call and who fail to see beyond their own ideas or convenience. I would remind you of the greatness of your commission, and challenge your souls again to remember in whose Name you have assumed your part in the most important work of the church.

One day last summer I sat with a young woman under the pines at Northfield. After a while she said, "I have taken my class of girls very easily. Often I haven't really studied the lesson. Sometimes I've talked a part of the time about other things. Not one of them is a member of the church. I am going to give them up. You make the standard so high. It is too hard." "Yes," I said, "it *is* hard. Have you asked to be let off?" "Oh, no," she said, "I shall not see my superintendent until October." "I did not mean the superintendent," I said, "I mean the One who taught his own class of twelve so patiently, against such great odds—and told us to *go* and to *teach*." "Oh," she replied in a tone of surprise, "that is a strange way to put it. I never once thought of that." "Before you give up the class," I said, "you would better get an honorable discharge from headquarters." I reminded her of all her great advantages, her leisure, her ability, and then we talked of other things. On the last night of the conference she walked to the auditorium with me. "I did not get my discharge," she said softly. "I am going to the —"

school two hours each week this winter and learn how really to teach. If God will help me, I'll make that class over."

Only he who sees the real Commissioner can find joy in the commission he has the honor to have entrusted to him—the greatest honor in the world, that of forming and reforming human character.—Condensed from an Article by Miss Margaret Slattery, in "The Pilgrim Teacher."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Did you ever hear a boy—or girl—tell about some happening and say that it was "in the winter that he broke his thumb" or, "the day that he went skating on the pond"? This is the way in which many people date events, by some happening that was of importance to themselves. Mothers often say, "It was the year that John was born," or, "the summer that Kate was so ill." How does our lesson begin? In that far-away time also a striking event was used to date another event, and so the prophet Isaiah says that it was "in the year that king Uzziah died" that he had his great vision which taught him many things; the holiness of God, the sinfulness of himself and his people, and the service to which God called him.

For Older Pupils. Dr. Peter Akers once denounced slavery and made a prediction—strange for that day—that the time would come when slavery would be overthrown. Among his hearers was a young man named Abraham Lincoln. As Lincoln walked home from church that morning he confided to a friend that during the sermon he had had a vivid vision of that coming time, and also a remarkable conviction that in some way he would in after years have an important share in bringing about this great consummation. Here was a vision and a prophecy. We study today a greater vision and prophecy of a greater prophet.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A VISION OF GOD

How the African sees God. The Central African believes in a God, and will not condescend to argue the point, says Dan Crawford. If you ask him how he knows there is a God, he replies: "How do I know that my goats passed along the wet, muddy road this morning, if not by the deep imprints left in the mud?"

A Pitiful Way of Trying to Gain a Vision of God. A missionary met a Hindu woman who was measuring the dusty road by ceaseless prostration of herself, constantly rising and placing her feet where her head had been, and so, after seven or eight hundred times, covering about a mile. Asked where she was going she named a place in the Himalayas, a thousand miles away, where some night emanation of gas suddenly taking fire is regarded by the natives as a manifestation of God. "What for?" he asked. "Vision of him," she cried, and turned back to her terrible task.

Have you had a Vision of Christ? No, of course, you don't see him with these outer eyes. Well, then, just what do I mean practically? you ask. *This*—has there come to you a real sense of himself, of his presence? of the tremendous plea his presence makes? And, possibly, you don't know just how to answer. You say, "I'm not just sure," or, "How can I know?" Well, you'll never say it that way, nor ask that question after the experience has come.

May I try to tell you a little bit about it? Yet, mark you, only "a little bit." You can never tell another what it means to see him.

When you see him there comes such a sense of *his purity* that, instantly, you are down on your face in utter despair, because of your own self—the sharp contrast between him and you. You feel that young Isaiah's outcry in the Temple is wholly inadequate. "Unclean lips," is it? Why, the whole thing, from innermost recesses clear through and out, is unclean. Then it dawns upon you that this is really what Isaiah is feeling and trying to express in his "woe" and "undone."

And that vivid sense of contrast between him and you never grows less, but more acute and deeper. Even when you come to know him better, and the sweet peace comes with its untellable balm to your spirit, you are always conscious of the contrast.

Then comes such a sense of *himself*, of his—what word can tell it?—his *glory*—which means simply his character, what he is in himself—that again words

can never tell out the sense of your own littleness; no, that is not the word, your own nothingness.

Have you seen Christ? This is what begins to come when you have—his purity, your contrasted lack; his glorious self, your own nothingness in yourself; his suffering, the price of your cleansing. After a little you begin to be caught all anew with how lovable he is.

He is so much more than anything that can be said about him. His will is so wise and thoughtful and far-reaching and loving! Strange how stupid you have been in insisting so strenuously and blindly on having your own way. His plan, his thought about everything concerning you is so superb. And he asks me to be his follower. What joy! What if the way be a bit rough; it's following him; that's enough. He calls me to be his personal friend.

Then you come to know, without being able to tell just how, that he is not only with you, but within you. At first his presence may have seemed as something outside yourself. You were looking away at Someone who was looking at you and his look at you broke your heart, and made your will, once so strangely strong in itself, now as strongly pliable to his as only a strong will can be. But now he is living within you. You may not be clear just how the change came. But you do know there's a something, which you come to know as a Someone, who is within. His presence is peace past understanding, but not past appreciation. There is a longing for his Word, a desire to talk with him even when you don't want to ask for something, a burning within to please him. These all seem to come from him, and at the same time to be satisfied by himself, even while they remain and increase.

Have you seen Christ? Then others shall see him, too, in you, and through you.—Condensed from "Quiet Talks on Following Christ," by S. D. Gordon.

He Talks with Me as Usual. Pastor Creissel of the McAll Mission in Paris was a man of prayer who had long companioned with his Savior. Two years ago, as he was near his end, he said to his wife, "Do you not see him? It is the Lord Jesus himself." "What does he say to you?" she asked. "Oh, nothing special: *il me parle comme à l'ordinaire*" (he talks with me as usual).

II A VISION OF SIN

What the Vision of God Brings. There came on the prophet, as in a flash, the two convictions, one which he learned from the song of the seraphs, ringing in the music through the Temple, and one which rose up, like an answering note from the voice of conscience within. They sang "Holy! holy! holy! Lord God almighty!" and what was the response to that in the prophet's heart? "I am unclean." Each major note has a corresponding minor, and the triumphant doxology of the seraph wakes in the hearer's conscience the lowly confession of personal unlikeness to the holiness of God. It was not joy that sprang in Isaiah's heart when he saw the throned King, and heard the proclamation of his name. It was not reverence merely that bowed his head in the dust, but it was the awakened consciousness, "Thou art holy; and now that I understand in some measure what thy holiness means, I look on myself and I say, 'unclean! unclean!'"

Now I venture to think that one main difference between shallow religion and real is to be found here, that the dim, far-off vision, if we may venture to call it so, which serves the most of us for a sight of God, leaves us quite complacent, and with very slight and superficial conceptions of our own evil, and that if we once saw, in so far as it is possible for humanity today to see God as he is, and heard in the depths of our hearts that "Holy! holy! holy!" from the burning seraphim, the easy-going, self-satisfied judgment of ourselves which too many of us cherish would be utterly impossible, and would disappear shriveled up utterly in the light of God. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear," said Job, "but now mine eye seeth thee; therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." A hearsay God and a self-complacent beholder—a God really seen and a man down in the dust before him!

Has this vision ever blazed on you? And if it has, has not the light shown you the seaminess of much in which a dimmer light detects no flaws or stains? Thank God if, having seen him, you see yourselves.—Dr. Alexander MacLaren, in "The Book of Isaiah."

Miserable Sinners in God's Sight. Many a one compares himself with others, and judging himself by such poor standards deems himself not much

of a sinner. What would happen to railway traffic if each engineer grew careless because he was "not more blind than other engineers"? What would happen to human lives if each surgeon grew careless because others made more mistakes than he?

From a sermon by the Rev. W. B. Selbie I quote these words: "I grant you that the people who crowd our churches today are very respectable people. I grant you that you cannot impute to them all the sins that their brothers and sisters out in the streets are committing every day. I grant you that their standard is fairly high—their moral and even their spiritual standard—compared with what it once was. But does this absolve them from every sin in the presence of God? Mind you, it is a question of standard altogether. If you measure yourselves among yourselves, and compare yourselves by yourselves, it is all right, no doubt. You do not feel very much worse than your neighbor, and you know that your neighbor is not very much worse than you are, and you are neither of you very bad.

"But what about it in God's sight? How does he look upon these easy, comfortable, and rather selfish lives that we live in these days? How does he look upon this creeping materialism that gets hold upon the very best of us, and makes us feel that life consists of the abundance of the things that we possess—makes us feel that the object of our existence here is to be comfortable, and to keep clear of trouble and disgrace, and just to go on a nice smooth pathway till the end comes? Is that what God intends? The man who has seen the vision of God cannot think of himself in those terms at all. The man who realizes that his wealth, for instance, his possessions, his talents, are God's gifts, and given to be used, and who keeps these things for himself, and to build up his own comfort and his own ease, and just gives a little here and there—that man is coming under the prophet's condemnation of robbing God. And the man who lives by the nice, easy, comfortable standard of religion, and who does the minimum of requirements under his Christian faith—that man, compared with the God manifested to us in Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross for men, however fair that man's exterior and however respectable his behavior, has to be accounted and judged, not in man's sight, or by men, but in God's sight, and by God, a miserable sinner.

"It takes a saint to see sin, and it takes a saint to understand that he is a sinner. Your coarse, hard and brutalized person knows nothing of sin. Your easy-going person knows nothing of sin. He knows the wrong against the social order, and he knows mistakes when he makes them, and that kind of thing, but not sin. Sin is a thing that God's contact with man makes and a man's contact with God; and a man has to be on the heights, a man has to see the holiness of God, a man has to dwell in that white light, before he understands what his life is really like in the presence of the eternal Truth; and so the great sinners of history have been the great saints. Paul was not a hypocrite when he cried: 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' And Augustine was not a hypocrite when he wrote in language of flame about his sin; and Luther was not a hypocrite when he saw that black spot upon his own life; nor was Bunyan, when he wandered out among the Bedfordshire fields and felt that he was a very toad in his own eyes. These were men who were able to do great things. These were men who were able to speak with living power of the things of God because they had "been there," so to speak. They had dwelt away down in the deep places with God, and, therefore, they were able to rise to the heights and to see him face to face."

III A PLEDGE OF SERVICE

Isaiah's Call and Consecration. Isaiah's sin being taken away, he is able to discern the voice of God himself. It is in the most beautiful accordance with what has already happened that he hears this, not as a command, but a request, and answers not of compulsion, but of freedom. "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me.'" What spiritual understanding alike of the will of God and the responsibility of man, what evangelical liberty and boldness are here! Here we have the secret of the filial freedom, the lifelong sense of responsibility, the regal power of initiative, the sustained and

unfaltering career, which distinguish Isaiah among the ministers of the old covenant, and stamp him prophet by the heart and for the life, as many of them are only by the office and for the occasion. His course, begun in freedom, is pursued without hesitation or anxiety; begun in utter self-sacrifice, it knows henceforth no moment of grudging or disobedience. Everywhere the man impresses us with his personality, with the wealth of his nature and the perfection of his control of it. But the personality is consecrated. The "Here am I" is followed by the "Send me." Isaiah is indeed a king and a priest unto God—a king with all his powers at his own command, a priest with them all consecrated to the service of Heaven.—Dr. George Adam Smith, in "Expositor's Bible."

Dreams grow holy put in action,
Work grows fair through starry dreaming,
But when each flows on unmingling
Both are fruitless and in vain.

—A. A. Proctor.

The Vision and the Pledge. There are Moslem zealots who have journeyed to Mecca and gazed upon the places which to them are sacred, and then, lest their eyes which have seen the holy city should profane that vision by looking thereafter upon unhallowed scenes, they have knelt down before white-hot bricks and let their heat burn out all power of sight forever. "The last thing I saw on earth was the Holy City," they proudly proclaim; "since then I have not seen."

Such a Moslem pilgrim sees his Holy City and then deliberately blinds himself and makes himself useless. An Isaiah sees the Holy God and strengthened by that vision volunteers for service. "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" questioned the vision of the Lord: and Isaiah answered, "Here am I, send me." The view of God gave Isaiah a view of self: the confession of sin brought a consciousness of salvation: the reception from God led to service for God.

Every Christian should Volunteer for Service. You know the story of the Scots Guards, how at the time of a British War in West Africa they were drawn up in line at Windsor and asked by their colonel who among them would volunteer for the Ashantee expedition. He explained the call, and then requested those who would respond to step one pace forward. Then he turned away for a moment, and when he looked again he saw them all in an unbroken line, just as they had been before. "What!" he exclaimed, "the Scots Guards and no volunteers?" "Sir," said another officer, "the whole line stepped forward."

So should it be with all Christians. The call that reached Isaiah comes to every one: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? and the answer that Isaiah made should be the answer of every one: Here am I; send me. A Christian must be a volunteer. Go work in my vineyard today. The vineyard is large. It includes the home, the school, the church, the Sunday-school, the young people's societies, the Home Missionary and the Foreign Missionary societies, the village, the city, the country, the whole world. Where have you been sent? In what department are you working?

Stirring Words to Young Men. One of the main functions of religion is to keep before us the ideal; and the young who see visions are a natural channel of its working. Despise not your youth in this its best aspect. Keep your visions: nurse them: correct them by the mind of Christ. As he knocks at the door of your heart, offering you not merely a state of blessedness, but a *career of service*, open to him willingly. He will inspire passion in you, and will regulate it; and will set you to your work in the world for him and for the brethren. He will give you a vocation which will fill your life, and will save it from gross temptations and redeem it from many evils. The heart that has seen the vision will not be satisfied with lower loves. The hand that has felt the touch of his finger will not move to evil ends. Bend to him, responsive to his love, eager for his great service; and even when you become old you will dream dreams of beauty and peace; and you, young men, will see visions of purity and joy, and noble life that will change the world. Let no man despise the youth which has in it such powers and potencies.—Hugh Black, in "The Gift of Youth."

Why Horace Tracy Pitkin Made his Pledge of Service. When a student

in Yale, Horace Tracy Pitkin became a Missionary Volunteer. The decision was made at Northfield. "Why did I make it?" Simply because I could not see why I shouldn't. The question came, not 'Why purpose to go?' but 'Why not purpose to go?' The presumption is in favor of foreign missions. As I saw nothing that stood in the way of my accepting the challenge, I did accept it, believing that God had used my reasoning powers to that end." He resolved to equip himself spiritually and intellectually, and to go unless the way should be finally blocked.

As his seminary course drew to a close he applied to the American Board for an appointment. He said: "My study had shown me the true depth and glorious responsibilities of the missionary service, and I know perfectly that God wanted me to work for him in the uttermost parts of the earth. There has been no call from the cloud, but the facts of my life and the results of study inspired by and carried on under God have been a sure and certain call to his work in the waste places."—Condensed from "Epoch Makers of Modern Missions," by Archibald McLean.

SENTENCE SERMONS

- Verse 1. Meditation is the eye wherewith we see God.—St. Ambrose.
Verse 5. We see ourselves when we see God.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.
Verse 8. The people who see great sights are the people who do great deeds.—Dr. Coyle.
Verse 8. God has a few of us to whom he whispers in the ear.—Browning.
Verse 10. Opportunity in human life is as often judgment as it is salvation.—George Adam Smith.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The little daughter of a noted French artist had been blind from infancy, when an operation gave her back her sight. Her first thought was to see her father. As soon as the bandages were removed she gazed long and eagerly upon his face, which was one of unusual nobleness, and then cried out, "To think that I had this father so many years and never knew him!" There are those who have had the Heavenly Father for many years, and still do not know the majesty and holiness of his nature.

Form the habit of going off by yourself at a fixed hour every day to see what God has to say to you.

"Be mine some simpler service here below—
To weep with those who weep, their joys to share,
Their pain to solace, or their burdens bear;
To serve some child of thine, and to serve thee,
Here am I! To such work send me!"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is a call to the ministry of God? See "Expositor's Bible, Isaiah," under "The Call," verses 4-8; A. B. Davidson's "Called of God."
2. The essentials of worship as portrayed in Isaiah VI—reverence, humility, service. See the three topics.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who were the kings of Syria and of Israel at this time? (2 K. 16.5.) 2. Who were the Baalim? (*Guide*, p. 254.) 3. What is meant by "burnt his children in the fire"? (*Guide*, p. 255.) 4. Where was the Valley of Hinnom? 5. Why was it wrong to sacrifice on the "high places"? (*Guide*, p. 256.) 6. Read about the war waged against Ahaz in Isa. 6.1-9 and 2 K. 16. 5, 6. 7. Where was Assyria? (*Guide*, p. 257.) 8. What was the result of calling upon Assyria for aid? (*Guide*, p. 256.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Was David the father of Ahaz? What does the expression in verse 1 mean? 2. What is the meaning of "He did not think that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah"? 3. Explain the force of the words in verse 23, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them." (*Guide*, p. 259.) 4. What things today are the ruin of men? 5. How may a Christian be in danger of becoming an idolator?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the stanzas on page 260. Begin a new Note-Book entitled "Kings and Prophets of Judah." This week write "I: The Prophet Isaiah's Call to Heroic Service."

AHAZ, THE FAITHLESS KING

Golden Text

Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him. Heb. 11.6

LESSON II Chronicles 28: verses 1-5, 20-27 printed MEMORIZE verses 1, 2

1 Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: and he did not that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, like David his father; 2 but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for the Baalim. 3 Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 Wherefore Jehovah his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him and carried away of his a great multitude of captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. 20 And Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not. 21 For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of Jehovah, and out of the house of the king and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria, but it helped him not.

22 And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against Jehovah, this same king Ahaz. 23 For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him; and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. 24 And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of Jehovah; and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25 And in every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger Jehovah, the God of his fathers. 26 Now the rest of his acts, and all his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem; for they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel; and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Ahaz' Idolatrous Practices, 1-4.
- II. Disastrous Wars with Syria and Israel, 5-7.
- III. Israel Returns the Captives, 8-15.
- IV. Ahaz Invokes the Aid of Assyria, 16-21.
- V. Ahaz' Continued Idolatry, 22-25.
- VI. The End of Ahaz, 26, 27.

1. *When he began to reign.* Ahaz reigned 735-725 B.C. See "The Historical Background."—*Like David his father.* Father is used in the sense of ancestor.

2. *He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel.* Which were evil.—*Molten images.* Idols that were cast.—*The Baalim.* This is the plural form of Baal. Baal is a common name, not a proper name; it means lord, and was given to various heathen gods.

3. *He burnt incense in the valley of the Son of Hinnom.* Compare Jer. 7.21, and see "The Geographical Background."—*And burnt his children in the fire.* In the hollow interior of the god Moloch a fire was kindled and when the arms became red hot, children were thrown into them and burned to death: see Jer. 19.5. Possibly here the reference is to the practice in idolatrous worship of merely passing the child over the altar flames. See "Light from Oriental Life." "The stories of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and of Jephthah's vow show that human sacrifice was not unknown in the early days of Israel, but

it probably was of very rare occurrence until the period of Ahab. In the later years of the Kingdom of Judah it became a not uncommon feature of religious worship" (Cheyne).

4. *He sacrificed.* He himself, thus setting an example of idolatry.—*In the high places.* See "Light from Oriental Life."—*Under every green tree.* "The Hebrew word here used for green means rather flourishing, the reference being not so much to the color as to the condition and size. Large pine trees (which are rarer in the East than in the West) are important landmarks. In different ways such trees acquired a sacred or semi-sacred character; in some cases because they were associated with theophanies; in others perhaps because the flourishing state of the tree was regarded as the sign of the presence of some local deity" (Barnes).

5. *The king of Syria.* Rezin, 2 K. 16.5.—*King of Israel.*—Pekah. See the account of the war upon Jerusalem made by Rezin and Pekah in Isa. 6.1-9, and 2 K. 16.5, 6. Rezin was at this time tributary to Tilgath-pilneser.—*They smote him.* Judah lost the port of Elath on the Red Sea.

20. *Tilgath-pilneser.* He was a Babylonian prince formerly known as Pulu, or Pul, 2 K. 15.19, who usurped the throne of Assyria and became Tilgath-pilneser III. He is often called Tiglath-pileser.

21. *For Ahab took away a portion out of the house of Jehovah.* He plundered the Temple of its gold and silver because oppressed by Assyria, according to the Chronicler. According to the account given in Kings, Ahab made a gift to the king of Assyria to secure his help against Rezin: Assyria accepted the gift, marched against Damascus, captured it, and slew Rezin. The monuments tell us that Tilgath-pilneser subdued and depopulated Galilee in 733 B.C., captured Damascus in 732 B.C., and Samaria in 722 B.C.—*Gave it unto the king of Assyria.* An inscription of Tilgath-pilneser records the receiving of tribute from "Jehoahaz of Judah," Jehoahaz being the full name of Ahab.—*It helped him not.* The immediate result was the delivering of Judah from Syria and Israel, 2 K. 16.9; 15.29; but the final result was that Judah had to pay a heavy tribute to Assyria, and this aroused the jealousy of Egypt. Isaiah had foretold what evil results would attend the intervention of Assyria; see chapter 7.

22. *In the time of his distress.* Under the oppression of the king of Assyria.

23. *He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus.* According to Second Kings, Ahab had a copy made of the altar which he saw at Damascus, and sacrificed upon it.—*Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them.* The Syrians were subject to the Assyrians at this time, and for Syria we may read Assyria. For the lure in these words see p. 259.

24. *Cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God.* To smelt them and make them over for other uses, no doubt; see 2 K. 16.16.—*And shut up the doors of the house of Jehovah.* In 2 K. 16.18 we read that Ahab altered the entrance to the Temple.

27. *They brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.* Compare 2 K. 16.20.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *Burnt his children in the fire.* In the Old Testament there are several references to the passing of children through the fire of Moloch. What was the ceremony? Jewish midrashim say that children were roasted to death in the arms of a red-hot idol. Some believe that they were merely passed over the fire, according to a ceremony which still exists here and there. Others that the children were first put to death, and then burnt in the fire as holocausts.

To whom were these terrible sacrifices offered? The name is given in the Hebrew text as Molech. Now *Molech* is usually taken as a corruption for *melech*, and *melech* is the ordinary Hebrew word for king. It may be, therefore, that these sacrifices were made to any god who might happen to be the king of any particular nation. It may be that they were offered by the Israelites to Jehovah. There are two interpretations as to the meaning of the rite. The simplest explanation is that the sacrifice to Molech was a particular application of the ancient law which devoted to the Deity the first-born, whether of cattle or of human beings. The other explanation is that the children were sacrificed in order to prolong the life of the human king. The sacrifice might have a vicarious value. There are examples of kings, and queens also, who offered their children not for the sin of their soul, but for the continuance of their days. For they believed that their god would be satisfied for a time, as a hungry wolf might be,

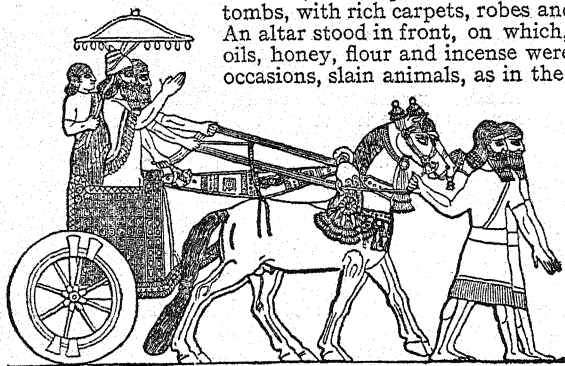
by devouring one of their children. Might he not even be satisfied at last by devouring them one after another, and so let the king literally live for ever? Yet the sacrifice of the children might have not a vicarious, but a magical value. That is to say, the earthly king believed that when a child was put to death, if proper rites were employed, its young life might be made to pass into his aged body, and enable him to renew his strength.—"Expository Times."

4. *He sacrificed incense in the high places.* The "high place," properly so called, though doubtless originally deriving its name from the eminence on which it stood, was a pillar of stone, covered, like Mussulman tombs, with rich carpets, robes and shawls (Ezek. 16.16). An altar stood in front, on which, on ordinary occasions, oils, honey, flour and incense were offered, and, on solemn occasions, slain animals, as in the Temple. Round about

usually stood a sacred hedge or grove of trees.
—Schürer.

20. *Tilgath-pilneser.*

A large clay tablet found in the ruins of the palace at Nimrud, and now in the British Museum, contains the official records of his reign. It begins thus: Palace of Tukulti-Apil-Esharra, the Great King, the powerful king, the king of the



Tilgath-pilneser in his Chariot.

world, the king of Assyria, the king of Babylon, the king of the land of Shinar and Accad, the king of the Four Quarters; the mighty, the brave, who by the help of Asshur his Lord brake in pieces like a potter's vessel the whole of them that obeyed him not, like a flood overwhelmed them, and gave them over to the wind.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Of what did Isaiah accuse the leaders of Judah in a lesson of last Quarter? What fate did he declare awaited them? Why did Isaiah feel that Uzziah's death was a great calamity?

Uzziah's Successors. After a fifty-two years' reign of almost unbroken prosperity, Uzziah was followed on the throne by his son Jotham. Luxury and oppression signalized the latter's reign. Ahaz, Jotham's son and successor, one of the worst of Judah's kings, had a reign of almost unbroken disaster.

The First Step that Led to the Captivity of Judah. Ahaz came to the throne in a time of trouble. Assyria was beginning her conquest, gathering in one after another of the nations of the western world. The kings of Syria and Israel wished Ahaz to join them in an alliance against Assyria. They tried to force him into such an alliance (Isa. 7.1-9). They attacked Judah and took multitudes away captive. Edomites and Philistines pillaged the country. Isaiah tried to induce Ahaz to rely on Jehovah, but in spite of his remonstrances, Ahaz turned to Assyria. Tilgath-pilneser came to his assistance, but imposed a burden of tribute on Judah and aroused the jealousy of Egypt. This step taken by Ahaz eventually brought about the captivity of Judah.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Valley of the Son of Hinnom, called usually the *Valley of Hinnom*, is the narrow ravine on the west and south of Jerusalem. Ge-hinnom was corrupted into Gehenna, the name given to the place of everlasting torment. Jeremiah records the building of high places in the valley so as "to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire," and declares: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that it shall no more be called Topheth, nor The Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter: for they shall bury in Topheth till there be no place to bury."

The kingdom of Syria comprised the region from Lebanon to the Euphrates. Its chief city was Damascus, two miles from the base of the Anti-Lebanon mountains; fifty-five miles east of the Mediterranean.

Assyria was originally a small district lying south and west of the Mountains of Kurdistan, Armenia, east of the Tigris River, and north of the Upper Zab. The limits of the kingdom were finally extended till it included all Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and parts of Asia Minor and Egypt. Its capital was *Nineveh*, on the Tigris River six hundred miles above the Persian Gulf.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In Africa a guide is described as "a killer of the roads." Not only must he walk in the right road, but he must "kill" the wrong roads. Stick in hand he walks ahead of those whom he is guiding in the right road, and when he comes to another, not the one they should follow, he "kills it" by drawing his stick across it, or by putting bunches of green leaves in the center of it.

This two-fold duty falls to teachers. Not only must they walk in the ways of Jehovah themselves and lead their pupils in the right paths, but they must "kill" for them the wrong roads. Our lesson today is about wrong paths.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. As soon as a little child in China can walk he is taught to clasp his hands before an idol in the temple, and bowing down, to knock his head on the floor before it in reverence. At first he is very much afraid of the great, ugly image in the dim light of the temple, but his mother perseveres in making him worship it. Which one of the ten commandments forbids the worship of idols? In the times which we are studying, there were many idols in the land of Judah. There was danger that the people would forget God and worship only these senseless things. Their king, even, bowed down to them. What was his name?

For Older Pupils. Records are being broken every day, whether in the speed of ocean steamships, in the endurance power of automobiles, in the speed and safety of air locomotion, in the number of saloons driven out of business, in the amount given for missionary work, in the numbers enrolled in our Sunday-schools. Nations as well as individuals make new records: sometimes it is a record-breaker, and sometimes a record-failure; sometimes a going beyond, and sometimes a falling behind, the standard previously attained. The record making that is chronicled in our lesson today is of a record-failure. What king of Judah had died at the time of Isaiah's vision? Who followed him on the throne? What sort of record did he make? Who was his successor?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I RIGHT IN THE EYES OF JEHOVAH

Ahaz did not that which was Right in the Eyes of Jehovah. What has become of all his eager strife, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, that burned so fiercely for awhile? All died down into a handful of gray ashes. And what lies in them like a lump of solid metal that has been melted out of the huge heap of days and deeds that fed the fire? The man's relation to God. That abides; that is recorded; that determines everything else about him. Waving forests that once had sunshine pouring down on their green fronds are represented in a thin seam of coal. Our lives will all come down to this at last. How did he stand toward God and his will, is the final question that will be asked about each of us, and the answer to it is the only thing that concerns the dead—or the living, either. Men write voluminous biographies of each other. How little their judgments matter to the dead men! Praise or blame are equally indifferent to them. But what matters is, whether God will have to record of us what is recorded of these two wretched kings, or whether he will recognize that the main drift of our poor lives was to serve him and do his will. He was a great scholar; he made a huge fortune; he rose to be a peer; she was a noted beauty, a leader of fashion, a queen of society—what will all such epitaphs be worth, if God's finger carves silently below them, "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord"?—Alexander Maclaren in "First Kings."

Are We Walking in the Ways of Jehovah? The Books of Chronicles have made us very familiar with this expression. We are told that Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, for he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam and in his sins wherewith he made Israel to sin; that it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for Ahab to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, he took to wife

Jezebel and went and served Baal; and that Jehovah was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought the God of his father, and walked in his commandments. In this way we might go through the records and make a list of those kings who walked in the ways of Jehovah and another list of those who did not.

With only two exceptions the Sunday-school of Stockport, England, has celebrated its "Walking Day" every year since 1812, for more than a century. Great crowds of people line the streets to see the mighty throng, headed by the city officials and leading men and women and including more than five hundred teachers and thousands of pupils, some of them over eighty years old, some of them very, very small. It is a beautiful thought that that marching throng, and all Sunday-schools throughout the lands, are regularly in the house of God to be taught his ways and to learn how to walk in his paths.

In his vision of "the golden age," Micah sees the time when all nations shall say, Come, let us go to the house of the Lord and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths.

Upside Down. The paper today tells of a boy living near London who sees everything upside down, inverts all his letters and figures and draws and copies objects wrong way up. Like that boy are those who care only to walk apparently uprightly in the sight of men, but whose hearts, as the eye of God sees them, are all wrong, upside down.

II IDOLATRY

The Extent of 'Ahaz' Idolatry. Ahaz seems to have had a mania for foreign religious practices. To the dreadful form of human sacrifice to Molech Ahaz gave the highest sanction by the devotion of one or more of his sons. More innocent customs or superstitions appeared in every part of the country and city. Golden and silver statues glittered throughout Judea. Soothsayers came from the far East; wizards, familiar spirits, ghosts, were consulted, even by the most outwardly religious. Altars were planted in the corners of the streets. In the palace was raised a flight of steps, on which the sun's shadow fell: in all probability suggested by some Babylonian traveler. To the Temple itself the same oriental influences penetrated, and even materially affected the structure and appearance of the building. On its roof were erected little altars, apparently for the worship of the heavenly bodies of the Zodiac. At the entrance of its court were kept chariots dedicated to the sun, with their sacred white horses, as in Persia or Assyria, ready to be harnessed on great occasions. The King's chief work, and that apparently on which he most prided himself, was the new altar, framed after the model of one he had seen at Damascus. The High Priest Urijah, the friend of Isaiah, lent himself to this innovation. The venerable altar of David, which had always been somewhat out of keeping with the magnificence of the Temple, was now displaced, and remained apart on the north side of the Temple court, reserved for any use which the innovating King might think fit to make of it. To the new altar he devoted all his reverence, and, with all the royal state of the ancient sacrifices, he came there morning and evening to present in his own person the accustomed offerings.—Schürer.

Ye Cannot Serve Two Masters. On a street running off from lower Fifth Avenue, New York, there stands a house that is noticeable because of its attractive individuality. The steps leading to the front door are in black and red mosaic. One day a member of the firm that occupied the building was escorting an oriental rug buyer up the steps, and he pointed proudly to an artistic design in the mosaic tilings which he had always particularly admired. The rug buyer gave one glance and gasped. "Do you know what that reads?" he questioned, indicating the Arabic characters in the design. "No, I didn't suppose it read anything." "Well, it does! The steps say: 'There is no God,' 'There is no God,' 'There is no God.'" The house had been remodeled by a man who was skilled in East Indian art, and he had intended inscribing on each step the sacred sentence from the Koran, "There is no God but Allah," but finding the steps not wide enough for the last two words he had omitted them.

Ahaz attempted to worship Baal as well as Jehovah: he said, "There are gods and God." But he found there was not room in his heart nor in his life for the heathen gods and the true God. God had said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image."

Ahaz tried to write throughout his kingdom that "There are gods and God," but the result was that he wrote only "There are gods," and left the true God out.

The Lure of the Words "Because the Gods of the Kings of Syria Helped Them." When Israel came into Canaan the people of Jehovah found the whole land filled with Baals, and it was simply impossible that they should not be influenced in some way by that portentous fact. The influence exerted would naturally depend much upon the individual, upon his loyalty to Jehovah; in a word, upon his moral qualities. But it would also be governed not a little by his power to think, and to make fine distinctions; in a word, upon his mental qualities. Let me illustrate what I mean by a supposititious case. Let us imagine a Hebrew family, in the period of the Judges, settled among heathen neighbors, and busily engaged in simple agricultural pursuits. Suppose now this Hebrew family should have two successive seasons of a poor crop of grapes, while not far away a heathen family should at the same time have good crops. It would be perfectly natural for the neighbor to say: "Ah, your good crops have failed because you have offered no sacrifice to the Baal of this land. Offer sacrifices next year and he will give you your desire. Your God Jehovah, who is your Baal, cannot give you good crops because he is not the Baal of this land." That would put the Hebrew's loyalty to Jehovah to a sore test. He would need good faith and devotion and courage to withstand it. Many did thus stand the test, but some went down under it into idolatry. But the temptation might come in a much more subtle way. The neighbor might, for example, say to the Hebrew: "Your Baal is Jehovah, our Baal is Chemosh, or Melkart, and you will never have good crops unless you acknowledge that your Baal cannot control things in your interest, so long as you remain in our Baal's land. Come, then, and offer a sacrifice to our Baal, but at the same time keep up all your sacrifices and offerings to your own Baal Jehovah." To resist that temptation would require not only loyalty to Jehovah, but also a certain skill of mind, the power to see the fallacy in the proposition to worship both Jehovah and Melkart. Many Hebrews stood that test, but some went down under it into religious syncretism—the mixing of religions.—From an Article by Professor Robert W. Rogers in "The Sunday School Times."

The Work of the Prophets. Nothing that I could say would exaggerate the dangers which threatened Israel in either of these two results, whether idolatry or syncretism. Either of these, fully carried out, would have destroyed the religion of Jehovah. The former would have destroyed it at a blow; the latter more slowly, but none the less surely, for to mix up with Jehovah's worship the worship of any Baal was certain sooner or later to choke to death Israel's religion. The blade of wheat could not grow and bear fruit amid a mass of tares. But even if the religion of Israel were not absolutely choked to death, it would most assuredly be transformed by the heathen elements which were certain to mingle with it. These dangers were recognized by the prophets, and it was this which filled them with a glowing passion against Baal worship in any form whatsoever, and against every little thing, however apparently innocent in itself, which might lend help to it. Everything which we have learned in recent years about the Baals and their worship proves conclusively that the prophets of Israel were absolutely justified in this attitude. The simple fact is that Baalism was morally rotten to the very core. The shrines on many a hilltop had become places of public prostitution. The Baals themselves were, in some and perhaps in many cases, moral lepers. The prophets were, indeed, standing in a critical time. The whole case for a higher, as against a lower religion, was in their hands. If Jehovah's religion had gone down to death, or had been corrupted beyond the possibility of reform and purification, everything which now combines to enrich our lives with the presence of God could never have come to existence. When I read the prophets' calls to Israel to turn away from every form and semblance of Baal worship, or Baal honor, I know what they mean, and my heart beats high with joy in the thought that there were found men whom our God could so fill with his presence and life as to make them the effective bearers of a message so true, so potent and so needful. They saved Israel's religion, and our religion, for our Lord came to Israel in the first instance, and there had to be an Israel for him to come to. We are therefore debtors to those impassioned men, and especially to those who cried out from Amos to Jeremiah; and no honor that we can pay them in our hearts is likely to exceed their deserving.—Professor Robert W. Rogers.

Our Duty toward the Idolater of Today.

I journeyed one day in the far distant region
Of China, that gray-headed land of the East,
Where the name of the gods and the idols is legion,
And each second day through the year is a feast.
I came to a place where the shade was most pleasant,
Where a brook rippled over its pebbled incline,
And a burden-bent, simple-souled, toil-broken peasant
Bowed down to an idol that sat in a shrine,
A moss-covered idol that sat in a shrine.

O brothers, far over the ocean waves praying,
Will you open your heart to this suppliant's call?
Will you help him today, with no thoughtless delaying
To find in your Savior a Savior for all?
Send the Word, the glad Word that from death shall relieve him;
Let the Light of the World in his heart brightly shine;
Will you tell him of Christ and the Gospel—or leave him
To the moss-covered idol that sits in the shrine?
—Joseph Taylor, in "The Baptist Missionary Magazine."

III THEY WERE THE RUIN OF HIM

Evil Beguiles and then Destroys. In the oriental jungle is a fig-tree that begins life as a parasite. A thin, slender shoot, tremulously weak, leans tightly on the base of some tall tree, clings and grows. Soon a second shoot, slight and frail, emerges near the root, but at a different angle from its aspiring brother, and others as delicate follow, until the trunk of the host is sprawled over by naked running shoots, crafty and insidious. The trunk becomes enveloped in living lace, all the while squeezing and causing decay, sapping the life-blood of the tree at all points. A greedy, intractable, implacable foe, it gives no quarter, but flourishes upon its dead or dying friend, upon which in its youth it leaned delicately for support.

So did idolatry delicately insinuate itself into Israel, and in a few years the goodly tree was overrun and blasted by the stealthy murderer. So evil ever beguiles, enslaves, and destroys.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Down They Came. The beginning of the end of a nation is always in the deadening and decay of its moral sense. It was thus with Rome, which had fallen through moral dry-rot long before advancing Goths trod it down. The corrosion of the national character always begins there. No nation long survives the decay of its conscience. "Down they came," said Matthew Arnold of ancient nations, "down they came, one after another, and all for lack of righteousness."—Thomas Yates.

Descent is Easier than Ascent. In the biography of Louis Agassiz, the great scientist, there is a vivid account of a descent he once made into the heart of a glacier. A great rope was fastened about him, and he was slowly lowered by his assistants to a depth of a hundred and twenty-five feet. When he had finished his examination and was ready to signal the men to draw him up, he was appalled at the sight which met his upward gaze, at the huge icicles which, pointing downward, had not hindered his descent, but which like javelins might easily cut his rope in two as it was being drawn upward. Descent is always easier than ascent, whether from the safe path into a glacier's crevasse or from the path of righteousness into sin.

Complete Ruin. In the course of Sir Guyon's quest of a witch as told in the book called "The Faerie Queene," he came to a beautiful ivory palace. A young man at the gate offered him wine, but he refused. As he passed through the garden a beautiful lady urged him to take some wine, but again Guyon refused. Had he taken the wine, it would have been the ruin of him and his quest. At last he captured the wicked witch, who had turned so many men into beasts, for the witch was Sin; she had been the ruin of all who listened to her. By touching the beasts with his staff the palmer, who had accompanied Sir Guyon, turned them back into men again.

Some of the men looked angry when they saw the witch a prisoner, and some were full of shame for their past conduct, but all were glad to be delivered. All, indeed, except one. His name was Grille, and he had been changed into a pig.

He had been a pig so long that he liked it, and said: "Why did you not leave me alone? I wish to be a pig. It is far better to be a pig than a man. There are plenty of roots and acorns, and nice mud to roll in. What more do I want?"

Sir Guyon in his astonishment over the completeness of the ruin into which this man had fallen through his companionship with Sin, exclaimed:

"See the mind of beastly man,
That hath so soon forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when his life began,
That now he chooseth with vile difference
To be a beast, and lack intelligence!"

Then said the palmer, "Let Grille be Grille, and have his hoggish mind," as he touched him with his staff and changed him into a pig once more.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. Whatever we are or have or do, is important only in connection with the religious bearing of our lives.—Gladstone.

Verse 2. God's eye discerns in Christendom vast chambers of imagery, a whole pantheon of unholy gods.—W. L. Watkinson.

Verse 4. Did any pagan worship his fetish ever more reverently, pray to it more confidently, put more trust in its power to help or to harm, than some men worship, implore and believe in the omnipotence of the minted dollar?—George Hodges.

Verse 25. "The gods of India are worshiped by forty-three million children; Buddha by twenty-seven million; fifty-seven million children worship their ancestors; and the Mohammedans claim eighty million children, while thirty-one million children worship fetishes and evil spirits. What can we do about it?"

Verse 27. If you live wrong you can't die right.—Billy Sunday.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"She believed that conscious fellowship with God is the foundation of every strong life, the natural source from which all must derive their power and their peace," wrote Professor Palmer of his wife, Alice Freeman Palmer. She did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah. Hers should be the belief and the dedication of every Christian.

We were discussing ideals in class one day, when a young man declared that Rockefeller was his ideal. "Mr. Rockefeller is an example of several admirable qualities," I said; "which of them makes him your ideal?" "Solely his ability to make money," he replied; "the one thing I intend to get in life, at whatever cost, is money." "Then you are an idolater," I observed, and the accusation amazed him. Was he not rearing up an altar for a Baal? Are you?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Boomerangs. Judah's experience with Assyria.
2. Judah in the time of Ahaz. See the Second Topic; G. A. Smith's "Jerusalem," Vol. II, pp. 125-131.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read all that is said about the reign of Hezekiah in 2 K. 18-20; Isa. 36-39; 2 Ch. 29-32. 2. How old was Hezekiah when he began to reign? (2 K. 18.2.) 3. How did Hezekiah compare with the other kings of Judah, as stated in 2 K. 18.5? 4. What was Hezekiah's first reform? 5. Tell about the cleansing of the Temple. 6. What was the origin of the Passover? (Ex. 12.) 7. Who had postponed the keeping of the Passover, according to Num. 9.10-11? 8. How long beyond the usual time was Hezekiah's Passover kept, and why? (2 Ch. 30.23-27.) 9. What was done with the altars in Jerusalem? (Verse 14.) 10. What effect of the Passover observance is recorded in 2 Ch. 31.1? 11. Tell about the Passover kept by Josiah, Chapter 35. 12. What does Mal. 3.7 say will be the result of turning to God?

Questions to Think About. 1. Is it surprising that Hezekiah should be so different from his father Ahaz? 2. What was the feast of the Passover? 3. What is unleavened bread? 4. Who were the "posts," verse 6? 5. What is meant by "sanctified themselves"? 6. Why is the phrase "from Beersheba even to Dan" used?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the stanza on page 269. Write "II: Ahaz, the Faithless King".

HEZEKIAH, THE FAITHFUL KING

Children Text

He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him. Hebrews 11.6

LESSON II Chronicles 30: verses 1-13 printed MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. 2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the assembly in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month. 3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number, neither had the people gathered themselves together in Jerusalem. 4 And the thing was right in the eyes of the king and of all the assembly. 5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem: for they had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written. 6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, who trespassed against Jehovah, the God of their fathers, so that he gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve Jehovah, your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. 9 For if ye turn again unto Jehovah, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive, and shall come again into this land: for Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

10 So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. 11 Nevertheless, certain men of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. 12 Also upon Judah came the hand of God to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king and of the princes by the word of Jehovah.

13 And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Summoned to the Passover, 1-12.
- II. The Passover Kept, 13-22.
- III. The Passover Prolonged, 23-27.

1. *Sent to all Israel.* See the "Chronology of Hezekiah's Reign," p. 264.—*Ephraim and Manasseh.* "Mentioned not as tribes, but as representatives of Israel."—*They should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem.* Local sanctuaries had been established throughout the land (2 K. 18.4); Hezekiah would abolish them and reestablish the supreme importance of the Temple.

2. *In the second month.* The first month, Nisan, corresponding to our month of April, was the regular time for keeping the Passover. According to Num. 9.10, 11, those who for good reasons were prevented from keeping it at the regular time might celebrate it in the second month.

3. *At that time.* At the proper time, in the first month.—*Because the priests had not sanctified themselves.* The fourteenth day was the time for the beginning of the Passover, and the Temple was not sanctified until the sixteenth day,

2 Ch. 29.17. "Under Hezekiah the sanctification of the priests consisted in certain abstinences, washings, and forms. Under Christ, our Great High Priest, it consists of separation from evil and of dedication unto God on its human side, and of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit on the Divine side. Both then and now only those are qualified to offer spiritual sacrifices who are themselves partakers of the grace of God" (Holden).

5. *From Beersheba even to Dan.* The usual phrase for the length of the land was "from Dan to Beersheba"; the chronicler naturally mentions here the southern city first. See the Geographical Background.—*They had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written.* The law of Ex. 12.6 required "the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel" to keep the Passover.

6. *The posts.* The couriers.—*Throughout all Israel and Judah.* "Revival always leads to unity. In India, in the early stages of the crops, the paddy-fields are divided by a number of ridges, which separate one plot from another. But when the green spires are reaching maturity, it becomes impossible to discern the divisions, because the whole vast acreage is covered with a mass of waving green. So with God's work in our hearts. When it is at a low ebb, the divisions between Christians are only too evident; but when a revival comes we no longer think of the fields but of the crop. Thus, in the time of national revival, Hezekiah and his people could not refrain from issuing a general invitation to all Israel as well as Judah, inviting them to turn again to the God of their fathers. The reception given to the royal messengers, in some cases, was very disappointing; but in Israel as in Judah many rose above national antipathy and alienation, and gathered round the paschal lamb, then, as now, the center of unity" (Meyer).

Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Jacob). Such a reference to the Hebrew fathers is common in the Old Testament: it served to remind the people of God's favor to them in the past.

7. *As ye see.* The Assyrian invasion was most recent.

10. *Even unto Zebulun.* Not so far as Dan on the extreme northern border.—*They laughed them to scorn.* Similar was the treatment of messengers sent out in Judah just before their captivity, 2 Ch. 36. 16.

12. *Came the hand of God.* "The mighty working of God."

13. *The feast of unleavened bread.* This feast in verse 2 is called the feast of the Passover. On the fourteenth the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and from the fourteenth to the twenty-first the unleavened bread was eaten: both names, "passover" and "feast of unleavened bread," were given to the combined feast as a whole.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *To keep the Passover.* In the feast of the Passover, the flight of the Israelites, its darkness, its hurry and confusion, was acted year by year, as in a sacred drama. Night falls: the stars come out; the bright moon is in the sky; the household gathers round, and then takes place the meal, of which every part is marked by the almost frantic haste of the first celebration, when Pharaoh's messengers were expected every instant to break in with the command: "Get you forth from among my people." The guests of each household at the moment of the meal rise and stand around the table. Their feet, usually bare when in the house, are shod as for a journey. Each member of the house holds a staff, as if for immediate departure; the long Eastern garments of the men are girt up, for the same reason, round their loins. The roasted lamb is torn to pieces, each snatching in his eager fingers the morsel which he might not else have time to eat. Not a fragment is left for the morning, as if it would find them gone and far away. The cakes of bread which they break and eat are tasteless for the want of leaven, as if there had been no leisure to prepare it, and finally the thanksgiving for the deliverance is always presented.—Stanley, "Jewish Church."

3. *Had not sanctified themselves.* A missionary in India was teaching in the home of a Brahman when two of the children entered and ran to their mother. Drawing herself away the mother asked, "Have you bathed?" When they said they had not the mother scolded them severely, and sent them off to be sprinkled lightly with cold water. To the missionary the mother explained: "They have just come from your school, and have been with lower caste children, so they are unclean, and must not touch me till they have bathed."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was Hezekiah's father? What sort of king was his father? What was the condition of Judah at the beginning of Hezekiah's reign?

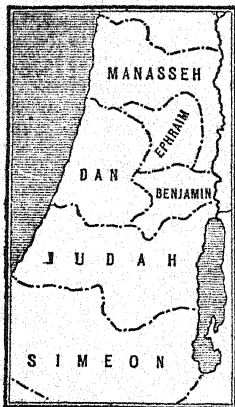
The Chronology of Hezekiah's Reign. Dates are confused and obscure. According to 2 K. 18, 10, Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, was taken by the Assyrians in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign. Six years before 721 B.C., the date of Samaria's fall, gives 727 B. C. as the year in which Hezekiah became king of Judah. But according to 2 K. 18.13 Sennacherib invaded Judah in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah. Fourteen years before the Assyrian invasion in 701 B.C. gives the year 715 as the date of the accession of Hezekiah. To reconcile these dates it has been suggested that Hezekiah reigned with his father Ahaz from 727 to 715 B.C.

Upon the date of Hezekiah's accession depends our understanding of the words "all Israel," verses 1 and 6, and of "the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hands of the kings of Assyria." If it was before the fall of Samaria, then the invitation was sent to the Northern Kingdom and the Assyrian king was Tilgath-pilneser. If he came to the throne after the fall of Samaria, he made his appeal to the few who were left in the Northern Kingdom after most of their number had been taken into captivity by Sargon II of Assyria. This is the natural interpretation of verse 6.

The Prosperity of Hezekiah's Reign. From his father Ahaz, Hezekiah inherited "an empty treasury, a ruined peasantry, an unprotected frontier, and a shattered army." All these conditions Hezekiah changed. Both in the capital and in the country he promoted the arts of peace like his ancestor Uzziah," says Schürer. "Towers and enclosures sprang up for the vast herds and flocks of the pastoral districts. The vineyards, oliveyards, and cornfields were again cultivated. The towers and fortifications of Jerusalem, the supply of water to the town, both by aqueduct from without and by reservoir hewn out of the solid rock, were for centuries connected with his name. 'Peace and truth' were the watchwords of his reign. When the merits of the kings were summed up after the fall of the monarchy, Hezekiah was, by deliberate judgment, put at the very top. There was "after him, none like him among the kings of Judah, nor any that was before him."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The locations of the tribes referred to in the lesson are shown on this little map. The cities of Dan and Beersheba were regarded as at the northern and southern limits of the undivided kingdom of David and Solomon.



The idolatrous altars were cast into the brook *Kidron*. The Kidron is a winter torrent, dry in summer, which separates Jerusalem on the east from the Mount of Olives. Thence the valley extends south-eastwardly through the Wilderness of Judah to the Dead Sea. It is often spoken of in the Old Testament as a place for casting out rubbish.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What king did we hear about last week? What sort of king was Ahaz? He did not at that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, our first verse told us. What were some of the evil things which he did? What was the name of his son who was king after he died? What does the title of our lesson call Hezekiah? The last two verses of the thirty-first chapter of Second Chronicles tell what Hezekiah did in the eyes of Jehovah: "He wrought that which was good and right and faithful before Jehovah his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, he did it with all his heart, and prospered." One of the things which he did with all his heart was to restore the worship of God in Jerusalem. We read that he sent letters to Israel and Judah: what for?

For Older Pupils. Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, who was notorious for not doing that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, is proof of the fact that no matter how greatly home influences are against righteousness, it is possible to be righteous. Hezekiah, Ahaz' son, is known as the king who did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. He was "a delightful character shining out in dark days. Ruskin remarks that the greatest painters have appeared in the most corrupt periods; and it would seem as if the most admirable saints often appear in times singularly corrupt. Grace renders men pure and noble, not the environment. Hezekiah lived in the sight of the Lord. He was thorough-going, uncompromising. He made short work of false and impure things. And not only did he destroy idolatrous and immoral institutions and observances; he also organized the service of God and made it efficient. And he carried all this out through a long reign."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I TURN AGAIN UNTO JEHOVAH

Put Away the Sin. "The good Lord pardon everyone that prepareth his heart to seek God"; and they showed their sincerity by taking away the idolatrous altars and casting them into the brook Kidron.

To find forgiveness we must firmly and finally put away our sin. It will not suffice to renounce it partially. Repentance must be thorough-going. After a revival in Scotland a publican remarked that before the revival the people shouted for their liquor, and after the revival whispered for it. It will not do to soften and disguise our sin. Someone declared that the chief effect of a revival in Cornwall was that the people changed their sins. Whatever this may exactly mean, we must not be content to substitute one sin for another. We must not qualify, conceal, or change our sin, but put it away.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Look unto Me, and Be Ye Saved, All the Ends of the Earth. "Six years ago today, I was in the 'gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity,' and had been led to feel the bitterness of the bondage, and to cry out by reason of the soreness of its slavery." Thus Mr. Spurgeon began one of his earliest sermons. "Seeking rest and finding none, I stepped within the house of God, and sat there, afraid to look upward, lest I should be utterly cut off. The minister rose in his pulpit, and read this text as I have done this morning. I looked at that moment, and the grace of faith was vouchsafed to me in the self-same instant."

God Meets One More than Half Way. Some children have a habit of straying and getting lost. I have heard that, whenever a large number of boys and girls go out for a day's holiday together, one or two are sure to be missing when the time comes for going home. How do they manage to get lost? Perhaps they see a pretty flower or a butterfly, and in order to get it, they begin by going just a little way in another direction than that taken by the rest. Then they go a little farther in the wrong way, and perhaps without knowing it take a wrong turning, and so lose themselves by degrees.

It is most unpleasant, is it not, to find yourself lost? You feel quite alone and deserted, and it seems as if you can never get back home or find your friends again. But after a time, if you are sensible, you begin to think. You feel that you cannot have gone so very far after all. You wait till you meet some one and you tell him where you live, and he will probably be kind enough to offer to see you home. But before you have gone very far on your homeward way, what is most likely to happen? You will see some one looking for you—your father, or mother, or your elder brother or sister. They had not forgotten you, but they were looking for you all the time, and they are as glad to find you as you are to be found by them.

Now God is always looking for us, because we are always getting a little bit lost. He says: Do not go on getting farther and farther off; come back to me and I will come back to you. God is so anxious for us to go back to him that he meets us more than half way.

There is a beautiful story told by our wise men, which runs something to this effect: When God was about to create man he took into his counsel the angels that stood about his throne. "Create him not," said the Angel of Justice,

"for if thou dost, he will commit all kinds of wickedness against his fellow-men; he will be hard, and cruel, and dishonest, and unrighteous."

"Create him not," said the Angel of Truth, "for he will be false and deceitful to his brother man, and even to thee." "Create him not," said the Angel of Holiness; "he will follow that which is impure in thy sight, and dishonor thee to thy face." Then stepped forward the Angel of Mercy (God's best beloved), and said: "Create him, O our heavenly Father, for when he sins and turns from the path of right and truth and holiness, I will take him tenderly by the hand, and speak loving words to him, and then lead him back to thee."

And God created man.—Condensed from "Sermons to Children," by Simeon Singer.

The Mysteries of Nature and of Grace. That great scientist of California, Luther Burbank, takes a tree that has been going to the bad for some reason or other for hundreds of years, and at last has become altogether ugly and noxious, and by the shock of a new creation he breaks up all its old habits, turns its energies into new channels, and makes of it a lovely and fruitful thing. And if your magician can work that miracle, and break up the habits of the tree and make of it a new thing, beautiful and fruitful, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God can break a man off from his past, and recreate him in the image of righteousness and true holiness?—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

II GOD IS GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL

God is Plenteous in Mercy. God's mercy wells up from an inexhaustible fountain. It is like the hot springs of Iceland, which defy the winter's grip. It is not God's will that the fathomless depths of his love should yield only a trickling stream to water a scanty patch of the desert within. Nay, he pours floods on the dry ground. Our sins may be, and are, as countless as the leaves of the forest that scatter to the ground in the damp autumn morning, but when once we turn to God for mercy, they are abundantly pardoned. Sins against light and knowledge, the repeated sins of his children, sins of presumptuous pride and sins of passion and suddenness, sins that we overtake and by which we are overtaken, sins of thought and speech and act—when we take with us words and return to the Lord, the place that knew them knows them no more forever. In Jesus we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, in which he abounds toward us. We are not only forgiven, but restored to our old seat in the family, and crowned with the old love. We are accepted in the Beloved. We stand before God clothed in his righteousness. We are fair in the comeliness which he puts on us.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Divine Mercy is Limitless. "Is it not cowardly to turn to God and ask for forgiveness for a sin he has already forgiven in us a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand times, and that we have deliberately committed again?" questions an editorial in "The Sunday-School Times." "Is there not a limit to the number of times when one may fairly expect such forgiveness? Ought we not to shrink from the unworthiness that could even prompt us to expect forgiveness unlimited after we have shown ourselves so utterly lacking in any claim on continued forgiveness? These questions press themselves in upon the minds of us all as we face the fact of our fresh failure in that sin which God has so often forgiven, and which we had hoped was to be put forever behind us long before now, because of God's loving mercy in pardoning it so freely. But they are questions that do not come to us from him, nor from our worthier selves. Only the Devil prompts them. That was Judas' unpardonable failure: not his betrayal of Christ, but his refusal to seek God's forgiveness for that betrayal, and to believe that God's love was great enough to forgive such a sin. God has asked us to bring our every failure to him and let him, in the blood of his Son, blot it out. He draws no line. It is only cowardice and ingratitude for us to assume a limitation to the mercy of a Father whose love is infinite."

Where They Do not Know that God is Gracious and Merciful. When Dan Crawford was lecturing in our country he gave this tragic side of the spiritual life in Central Africa.

One day I had just finished my fifteen miles. I must have been very jaded, for I dumped down on a log of wood lying in the grass. I did not see a native at my elbow, for the grass was so tall.

"You are angry, sir," the man said.

"Oh," I said, turning and dissolving in smiles, "tell me all about it. You seem to know, sir." (In Africa we are all very polite to one another.)

"You are silent," he said, "and that means you are angry."

"What do you mean?" I asked, scenting philosophy.

"Well," he said, "that is the reason why we know that God is angry, because God is silent."

That is the tragedy of those dying millions in Central Africa—they think God is a malignant demon, cold and callous. Stars rise and set, rise and set; up go a million moans from the merciless marshes, and no answer, no answer. God to them is silent; God is angry.

He Hath Not Dealt with Us after Our Sins. Two boys were playing on a narrow ledge, worn smooth in the face of a seaside cliff. Some twenty feet beneath, the deep, sea-green water lapped against the rock. One of the boys was the miller's son. He had been warned again and again of the peril of the path. He had been caught and chastised. This day a careless step to the edge paid its penalty, and he fell into the smooth, deep water below. Death seemed to be his just fate. But his keen cry was heard in the nearby mill, and his father ran out with anger in his face. But when he saw his son struggling with death the frown became a spasm of anguish, and at the risk of his own life he plunged in and rescued him. As the boy lay in his exhaustion, tended by loving care, he knew how far it was true that our sins find us out. He understood the Psalmist's profound word, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities." He knew that the world which seems to be all law, is really all love, and that mercy rejoices against judgment.—W. M. Clow in "The Cross in Christian Experience."

III REFORMS

Hezekiah's Reforms. Strange as it seems, Hezekiah, the son and successor of such a king as Ahaz, "did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. He trusted in Jehovah the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them all that were before him. And Jehovah was with him; whithersoever he went forth he prospered," 2 K. 18.3-7.

Upon his accession to the throne Hezekiah began his reforms. There were heathen altars everywhere in Jerusalem, idolatrous high places throughout Judah, the Temple was polluted and closed, the lamps were put out, the sacred vessels were removed, and the priests and Levites were scattered. Hezekiah directed the Levites to cleanse the Temple. When this work was completed he reinaugurated the Temple services with a great dedication feast, with its sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, thank-offerings and peace-offerings. "So the service of the house of Jehovah was set in order."

Hezekiah's next step was to send letters summoning all Israel as well as Judah to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. The idolatrous altars that had been erected throughout the city were broken up and the debris was cast into the brook Kidron before the paschal lambs were sacrificed on the fourteenth of the month. Priests and Levites, seeing the zeal of the people, were ashamed of their earlier delay, and after making themselves ceremonially clean according to the law, they carried out their duties. Many of the people were not ceremonially cleansed, and were therefore unfit to partake of the Passover; for them Hezekiah besought God's pardon. For seven days the people kept the feast with great gladness, and the king commended the Levites for their part in the exercises. Yet another seven days the feast was prolonged, and great was the joy in Jerusalem. The ceremonies ended with the blessing and prayer of the Levites.

The Reform of a Nation will Come with the Growth in Grace of the Common Man. In a conversation with an American newspaper correspondent about the reform movement in Russia, Tolstoi asked, "Why not try the development of the individual? The state cannot be stronger than its weakest link. You must build up the individual before you build up the state." Then he remarked that he could say little good of the present Russian government, but admitted that it was better than the government of Herod and Pilate, under which Jesus lived and taught, and developed his perfect manhood.

"So we seek to alter conditions," he said, "rather than ourselves, I suppose because we find it easier."

The conclusion of this great Russian philosopher is not new. It is so old and

so obvious that men are continually forgetting it in their search for some cure for the evils of government, to say nothing of the evils of society.

The constant demand for change in the method of electing public officers and in the system of doing business, and the appeal for new laws to eradicate abuses that arise from defects in human nature, and can be cured only by reforming the individual, come from persons who seek what they regard as the easier way—as Tolstoi puts it. He might also have described it as the futile way.

Appeals are now before Congress and the State legislatures for the passage of hundreds, if not thousands, of laws for the reform of various abuses. The idea seems to prevail that if a law is enacted forbidding anything that thing will no longer be done. Men and women trust in the efficacy of a statute, forgetting that in a free country law is really nothing more than the will of a majority. Many a statute which has been passed because no one could raise an objection to its desirability has been so remote from the general state of public and private practice that it has never been enforced.

The effective remedy for abuses lies in an awakened public sentiment rather than in new laws. Laws are important and necessary, but one should never forget that the passage of a law is the smallest part of a great reform. The struggle comes when the law is to be enforced, and the struggle is especially hard when the law is in advance of public sentiment. Such progress as is made is based upon the growth in grace of the common man.—“Youth's Companion.”

Modern Hezekiahs. When Dean Farrar was put in charge of Canterbury Cathedral, he sought to restore the ancient church which was founded by St. Augustine to its original beauty and grandeur. To do this he wisely refrained from tearing down any part of it, and from adding a single wall or pillar. He simply removed the heaped dust of ages, and cleaned away the grime with which irreverent time had hidden the beautiful frescoes upon the walls.

His work was successful. The graves of martyrs who died for the cause which they believed to be true were discovered; beautiful chapels were dug out of the heaped earth, in which ages ago men and women, striving to find God, prayed to him, and from the cleaned walls the faces of holy men of old again looked down with warning or triumph in their eyes.

Americans have no ancient cathedrals to clean and restore. In this country now the work of reform is that of human beings. Christians and agnostics are alike busy with schemes to uplift the degraded and criminal classes. Perhaps they could gain a useful hint in their work from the wise dean.

If you would help your neighbor, don't begin by battering down his manners, his prejudices, his individual character, or by building up your own mind in him. Clean away the rubbish of his evil life, and uncover the original good in him.

Bishop Johns, preaching to the negro convicts in a Richmond jail, once said, “Don't think of your thefts and fights, but of the time when you were good boys, and knew nothing of stealing and killing.”

In the hearts of many of the worst men as in the dark crypts of the cathedral lie hidden forgotten altars and the likeness of a holy face. Uncover them. David, after all his crimes, said of God, “He *restoreth* my soul.”—“Youth's Companion.”

What is the Greatest Need of the Church in New York? Is it more organization? Is it more reading and conscientious study of the Bible? Is it more insistent and sustained prayer? Is it more regular attendance at church services? Is it ability to account for the life and needs of every individual whose name now appears on the church roster? Is the need of your church more virile men who will stand abreast with you in facing the oncoming enemies of him whose church includes all others and of which every one of us is a unit?

To be sure the need of the Church in New York is more men, more prayer, more Bible reading, more unity of effort and directness of purpose. But how is this complete need to be supplied? I venture to say that the greatest need of the Church in New York today is a revival of religion. A religious revival. A revival of the religious impulses which we all have had. A revivifying of our spiritual hopes and a revitalizing of its ministers and a life-producing unity of intercourse among all men who have pledged themselves to the service of propagating the faith.—C. W. Welch, in “New York Tribune.”

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 2. Everything regarding form is elastic in the interests of the soul.—Dr. L. W. Watkinson.

Verse 6. In Bible language repentance is turning from sin to God.—Gipsy Smith.

Verse 9. A fault is not effaced because we reproach ourselves with it; it is effaced only when we set our whole heart to seek the Divine mercy and strength.—W. L. Watkinson.

Verses 10 and 11. The same fire melts wax and hardens clay.—Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 12. All the great revivals have begun with the people of God: after they have been quickened and cleansed, Divine life has flowed through them into the world.—Francis E. Smiley.

Verse 13. Churches don't need new members half so much as they need the old bunch made over.—"Billy" Sunday.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Hezekiah, the Faithful King, is the title given our lesson. That is high praise. Hezekiah was faithful in the discharge of his duties to God and to his people. Are we faithful to God and man in the place where God has placed us? Shall we ask him to keep us faithful?

"So I ask thee, give me grace
My own life's place to fill,
That I may ever walk with thee,
And ever do thy will;
That in each duty, great or small,
I may be faithful still."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. King Hezekiah. See Lecture XXXVIII of Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church," vol. II.
2. Reforms. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. In what two other books of the Old Testament is an account of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah given? (2 K. 18-19; 2 Ch. 32; Isa. 36-37.) 2. What are the dates of Sennacherib's reign? 3. How long had Assyria menaced Judah? (*Guide*, p. 273.) 4. What had Assyria done to the Northern Kingdom? 5. What preparation had Hezekiah made to withstand an attack? (2 Ch. 32.2-8.) 6. Tell how Rabshakeh tried to turn the common people away from their allegiance to their king. 7. What information do the monuments give us about Sennacherib? (*Guide*, p. 274.) 8. What was Hezekiah's prayer? (2 K. 19.14-19.) 9. What words in Sennacherib's letter were a defiance of God? 10. What was Sennacherib's boast? (Verses 23, 24.) 11. Were hook and bridle ever attached to a man's lips? (*Guide*, p. 272.) 12. Did grass actually grow on housetops in Jerusalem? (*Guide*, p. 272.) 13. Describe the methods employed in an ancient siege. (*Guide*, p. 272.) 14. What was the land of Ararat?

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of "hath shaken her head at thee," verse 21? (*Guide*, p. 270.) 2. What is the meaning of Sennacherib's boast in verses 23 and 24? (*Guide*, p. 270.) 3. What do the four expressions in verse 27 mean? 4. What is the meaning of the word "sign" as used in verse 29? 5. Does God always bring victory to a nation that prays for victory? 6. Do you always get what you pray for? 7. How does God answer prayer? 8. What is the use of prayer?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Carlyle's translation of Luther's hymn, page 276.

In your Note-Book write "III, Hezekiah the Faithful King."

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION OF JUDAH

Golden Text

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

LESSON II Kings 18.13-19.37: verses 19.20-22, 28-37 printed

MEMORIZE verses 32, 33

20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard thee. 21 This is the word that Jehovah hath spoken concerning him: The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. 22 Whom hast thou defied and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

28 Because of thy raging against me, and because thine arrogance is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

29 And this shall be the sign unto thee: ye shall eat this year that which groweth of itself, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year, sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. 30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. 31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of mount Zion they that shall escape: the zeal of Jehovah shall perform this. 32 Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. 33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah. 34 For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. 37 And it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

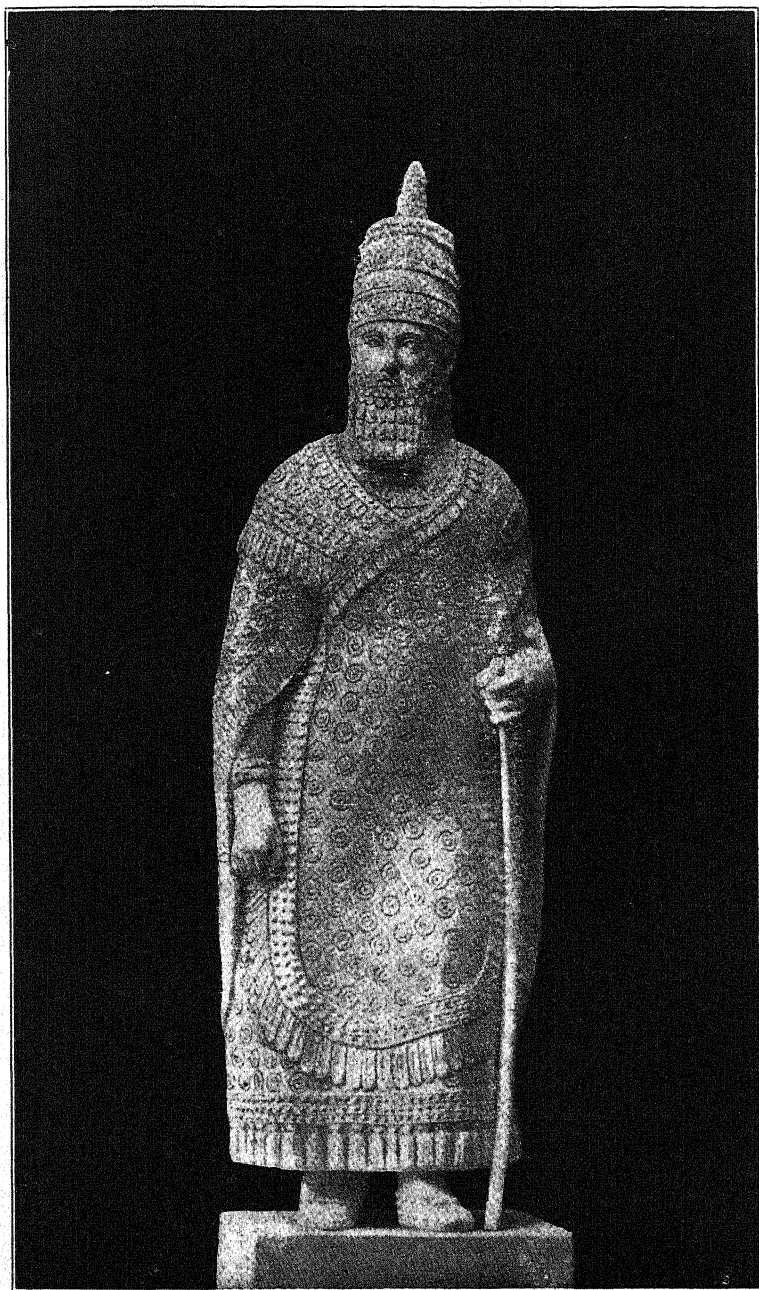
- I. Isaiah's Prophecy of Deliverance, 20-34.
- II. Sennacherib's Defeat and Death, 35-37.

20. *Whereas thou hast prayed to me.* See verses 14 19.

21. *The virgin daughter of Zion.* The city is often personified in the Scriptures as a woman: Micah 4.10; Is. 23.10, 12.—*Hath shaken her head at thee.* A gesture of contempt. "She shakes her head after him as he departs in disgrace and shame, and, moving it backwards and forwards, says by the gesture that it must be so and could not be otherwise, Jer. 18.16; Lam. 2.15" (Delitzsch).—*At thee.* Hebrew, *after thee*, RVm.

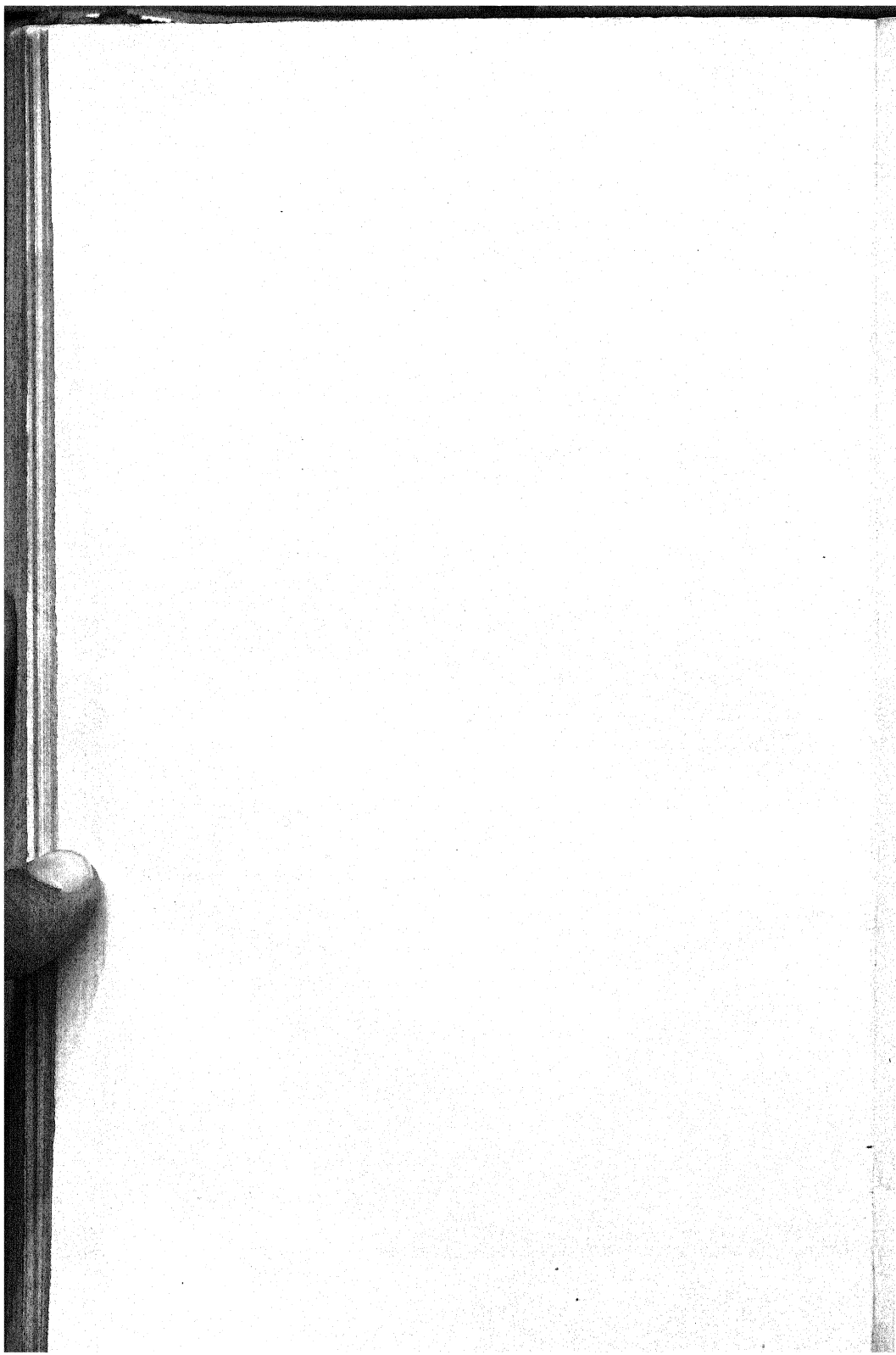
22. *Whom hast thou defied . . . on high?* Rhetorical questions. *Defied:* see verse 4. *Lifted up thine eyes on high;* haughtily, see Isa. 2.11.

23-24. Sennacherib's boast. *With the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the innermost parts of Lebanon.* No mountain, however high, had proved an obstacle to him. "I, the great, all powerful king, have performed this seemingly impossible feat. The Assyrian inscriptions present several parallels to this boastful language. Thus Shalmaneser says, 'Traceless paths and difficult mountains, which, like the point of an iron sword, stood pointed to the sky, on wheels of iron and bronze I penetrated.' Clearly these boasts of Sennacherib are not to be taken literally" (Cheyne).—



SENNACHERIB

From a Restoration of the Statue Found in the Ruins of his Palace
Now in the British Museum



I will cut down the tall cedars thereof and the choice fir trees thereof. The cedars and fir trees stand for "kings, princes, nobles, all that is highest and most stately."—*The forest of his fruitful field.* Or, the forest-like field (of valuable trees).—*I have digged and drunk strange waters.* He boasts that he can get his own water by digging new wells, the stopping up of old wells (2 Ch. 32.2-4) cannot hinder his advance.—*With the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt.* He boasts that after conquering Judah he will march on to the conquest of Egypt. The mouths of the Nile, which were Egypt's chief defense, are to him "as a mere puddle, which he tramples out with his foot."

25-28. Jehovah's response to Sennacherib, for Hezekiah's encouragement.

25. *Hast thou not heard?* Rhetorical question.—*How I have done it long ago?* All events are of his ruling: compare Acts 2.23.—*That it should be thine to lay waste.* You are only my agents.

26. *They were as the grass . . . grown up.* "The point of comparison in the four images is the easiness of the conquest: before Assyria the nations became like weak, delicate, superficially-rooted grasses, and a cornfield not yet grown to stalk, which can be easily pulled up and does not need the sickle" (Delitzsch). Compare Ps. 129.6-8.

27. *Sitting down, going out, coming in, raging against me.* Compare Ps. 139.2; 121.8. By these phrases are meant all Sennacherib's doings and thoughts.

28. *Thine arrogance.* Or, *thy careless ease*, RVm.—*I will put my hook in thy nose and my bridle in thy lips.* The Assyrian will be led like a beast. Compare Ezek. 29.4; 38.4, and see p. 272.—*I will turn thee back.* See verses 7 and 33.

29. The prophet now turns to Hezekiah.—*The sign.* Of the fulfilment of the preceding prophecy. Compare the signs of Ex. 3.12.—*This year.* The year of the invasion.—*That which groweth of itself.* The grain which had sprung up from the kernels which chanced to fall in the preceding harvest. Compare the law in Lev. 25.5.—*In the second year . . . and in the third year.* "During this year it had been impossible, with the Assyrians in the land, to sow the seed, and the Jews had been dependent on the precarious crop of what had fallen from the harvest of the previous year and sown itself. Next year, it being now too late to sow for next year's harvest, they must be content with the wild corn, that which springs up of itself, but the third year they could sow. Perhaps we ought not to interpret these numbers literally. The use of three gives the statement a formal and general aspect, as if the prophet only meant, 'It may not be quite at once that we get rid of the Assyrians; but when they do go, then they go for good, and you may till your land without fear of their return'" (George Adam Smith).

30. *The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah.* Many cities had been captured and the population of Judah greatly diminished.—*Take root downward.* Grow in strength. See Isa. 27.6.—*Bear fruit upward.* Increase in numbers.

31. *Out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant.* See ¶ 4, p. 374.

32. *Nor cast up a mound against it.* Preparatory to a siege.

33. "Never had a prophet predicted more boldly, never was a prediction more brilliantly fulfilled" (Driver).

34. *For mine own sake.* Recall Hezekiah's words in his prayer, Isa. 37.20: Save us that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art Jehovah, even thou only.—*For my servant David's sake.* Recall the promise of 2 S. 7.16. "It was perhaps the most dramatic moment in Israel's history. The life or death of the nation was trembling in the balance. On one side stood all human probabilities, all that human eye could foresee or human skill calculate; on the other, the unwavering promise of Isaiah. Which would the event justify? The conflict of hopes and fears must have been intense, the suspense while it lasted more agonizing than can be imagined" (Driver).

35. *The angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrian a hundred fourscore and five thousand.* What was the means employed, the narrative does not say. In 2 S. 24.15-16, the pestilence is attributed to an angel, and it is probable that it was a pestilence which destroyed the Assyrians. "A modern historian would dwell on the details of the pestilence: to Isaiah, who had learned to see in the winds the messengers of God, it was nothing else than the angel of Jehovah." Recall Byron's lines, page 354.

37. *Smote him with the sword.* The murder of Sennacherib in an insurrection is recorded on Assyrian monuments. The date was 681 B.C.—*The land of Ararat.* Armenia.—*Esar-haddon reigned.* 681-668 B.C.

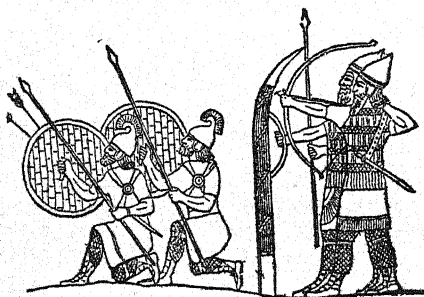
LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

26. *As the grass on the housetops.* The flat roofs of Palestinian houses are covered with earth and gravel, rolled hard, and this covering is often rerolled after a rain to prevent leaking. Grass easily grows upon such roofs, but because its roots cannot sink deep into the soil it dries up quickly, or it is destroyed by the trampling of feet or the use of the roller.

28. *Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose and my bridle in thy lips.* In the bas-reliefs taken from Khorsabad there are representations of prisoners brought before the king, each prisoner having an iron ring through his lower lip. To these rings, cords ("bridles") are attached, which the king holds in his left hand, while with the right he is thrusting a spear into their eyes. The hook in the nose is not so frequently represented.

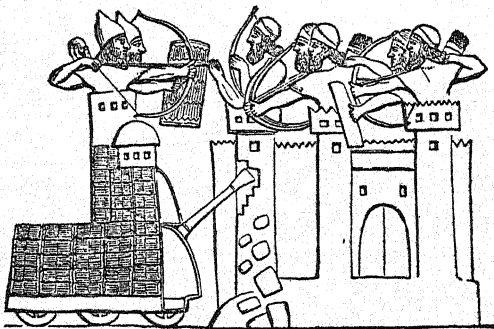
On an Assyrian inscription Assurbanipal says: With the knife which I use to cut meat I make a hole in his (the Arabian King's) jaw. I passed a ring through his upper lip. I attached it to a chain with which one leads the dogs in leash.

32. Here we have three operations of an ancient siege very accurately portrayed. The Nineveh sculptures depicting the siege of Lachish, exactly explain the method of assault. The final means of capture was the mound raised against the wall of the beleaguered places. For the erection of this the archers were indispensable. While the slaves and laborers of the army were heaping materials for the mound, the archers were continuously employed in shooting at every defender who appeared on the ramparts, galling them with their arrows, and thus protecting their workmen or drawing off the attention of the enemy. The archers, as we see from the Assyrian sculptures, were protected by the shield men. The shield was a strong,



Archers Defended by Armor-Bearers

wooden, oblong frame as high as a man, covered with leather, resting on the ground, and held by its bearer in front of the archer, who under its protection was not only safe, but was able to take deliberate aim. The mound was made of any materials that came to hand, with a gradual slope upwards till it almost reached the wall and was not much inferior to it in height. When completed, battering rams were plied from it against the upper part of the wall and the battlements, until a breach was effected.—H. B. Tristram, in "Eastern Customs."



A Battering Ram Attacking a City

35. *The angel of Jehovah went forth.* Herodotus also ascribes the deliverance to Divine intervention. "There came in the night a multitude of field mice," he says, and we must recall that the mouse was the ancient symbol of pestilence. "They devoured all the quivers and bow strings of the enemy and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their flight, and great multitudes fell, as they had no arm with which to defend themselves. There stands today in the temple of Vulcan a stone statue of Sethos, with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect, Look on me and learn to reverence the gods."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was Isaiah? What lessons have we had from the Book of Isaiah? In an earlier lesson Isaiah arraigned the leaders of Jerusalem: why? Who did he declare would be the agent of Jehovah in punishing them?

The Assyrian Menace. For more than a quarter of a century the Kingdom of Judah had been menaced by Assyria. Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, had done homage to the Assyrian king, and both he and Hezekiah had been almost vassal kings of the great Assyrian Empire. In 722 B.C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been conquered by Sargon II, king of Assyria, and the people carried into captivity. Sargon was succeeded by Sennacherib, who reigned 705-681 B.C. Merodach-baladan again proclaimed himself king of Babylonia—the one who sent an embassy with presents to Hezekiah during his sickness, 2 K. 20.12-19, presumably for the purpose of inciting him also to rebel against Sennacherib—and was defeated by Sennacherib.

Meanwhile Hezekiah had defeated the Philistines (2 K. 18.8), had prepared Jerusalem to withstand a siege by having a conduit for water built (2 K. 20.20), and, contrary to Isaiah's counsels, had sent gifts to Egypt to gain her promise of aid in a revolt from Assyrian control. Chapters 28-31 of Isaiah give the prophet's rousing sermons delivered at this time: his words of warning against trusting in Egypt, whose weakness he well perceived; his assurance of the futility of revolt against Assyria, whose strength he likewise saw; and his counsels to trust in Jehovah, who alone could deliver them. His "precept upon precept" fell on dull ears, and he declared that "by men of strange lips and with another tongue" they should be made to hear.

The Assyrian Invasion. In 701 B.C. Sennacherib's army moved westward against the rebels along the Mediterranean shore. He conquered the

Phoenician towns one after another, save Tyre, met and defeated at Eltekeh the Egyptians who had come to the aid of the Palestinian states (or, as some think, Arab tribes from Asiatic Egypt), and then captured all the fortified cities except Jerusalem, 2 K. 18.13-16. Hezekiah yielded and sent this message to Sennacherib at Lachish: "I have offended; return from me; that which thou puttest on me will I bear." And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.



Sennacherib on His Throne

To pay this tribute, Hezekiah had to empty his own treasury and that of the Temple, and even to strip the portals of the Sanctuary of the gold that covered them. It did not prevent Sennacherib, however, from sending a great army to lay siege to Jerusalem. Three officers were in command of the Assyrian army: Tartan, or the Commander-in-chief, Rab-saris, the head of the royal household, and Rabshakeh, "the civil commissioner." Rabshakeh proved an insolent diplomatist. Meeting Hezekiah's representatives without the city, by the conduit of the upper pool, he argued that resistance to Assyria was useless. The king's officers, fearing the effect of his speech on the people, asked him to speak in the Syrian language which the common people could not

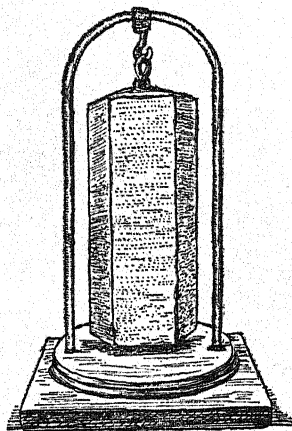
understand. Rabshakeh raised his voice louder in the Hebrew language and tried to bribe the masses with all manner of promises if they would break faith with their king, their country, and their God. He spoke in vain. "The people held their peace, and answered him not."

Hezekiah's Prayer. In "this day of trouble, of rebuke and of contumely" Hezekiah turned to Isaiah for counsel, and Isaiah prophesied the retreat of Sennacherib. Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah, saying: "Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying Jerusalem shall not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly, and shalt thou be delivered?" Hezekiah read the letter, and went up into the house of Jehovah. "O Jehovah our God, save thou us, I beseech thee, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou Jehovah art God alone," he cried in the anguish of heart. The answer to that prayer through Isaiah is our lesson today.

Were There Two Invasions? The history as given above supposes that there was but one campaign, in 701 B.C., but some scholars believe there were two invasions, the later one when Jerusalem was besieged in 690 B.C., the date given by Herodotus and by the monuments.

Light from the Monuments. An interesting confirmation of Sennacherib's attack here is furnished by a sculptured slab discovered by Layard on the walls of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh. There is this inscription over the king's head: Sennacherib, king of nations, king of Assyria, sitting on the throne, causes the spoils of the city of Lachish to pass before him.

Sennacherib's own account of his invasion of Judah is given on the six-sided terra-cotta cylinder found in 1830 at Nineveh and now in the British Museum. It is often called "The Taylor Cylinder" because it was formerly owned by Mr. Taylor. The words are as follows (Dr. Ball's translation, in "Light from the East"): But as for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong cities, together with numberless fortresses and small towns in their neighborhood, I invested and took by means of the battering of rams and the assault of scaling-ladders (or siege towers), the attack of the foot-soldiers, mines, bills, and axes. I brought out from the midst of them, and counted as spoil 200,150 persons, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep without number. As for himself, I shut him up like a bird in a cage in his royal city of Jerusalem. I built a line of forts about him, and whoever came forth from the gate of his city I punished. His cities which I had plundered I severed from his territory, and gave them to Mitinti king of Ashod, Padi king of Ekron, and Zil-baal king of Gaza; and so I diminished his territory. To their former annual tribute I added an impost of presents to my Lordship, and laid it upon them. Him, Hezekiah, the fear of my august Lordship cast down; and the Arabians and his trusty warriors whom he had brought in for the defense of Jerusalem his royal city fell away. Along with thirty talents of gold (2 K. 18.13-16) (and) eight hundred talents of silver, he caused to be brought after me precious stones, carbuncles, kassu stones, great pieces of lapis, ivory beds, ivory thrones, elephant hides (and) tusks,



Taylor Cylinder

ushu-wood, box-wood, all sorts of things, a huge treasure, and his own daughters, the womenfolk of his palace, men-singers, women-singers, to Nineveh the city of my Lordship; and he despatched his envoy to pay the tribute and do homage.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For Assyria, see page 257. *Nineveh*, its capital, was on the Tigris River six hundred miles above the Persian Gulf.

Lachish was a city southwest of Jerusalem on the way to Egypt.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The great heroes of the Bible have all lived in close communion with God; to him they have brought all their joys and their sorrows. Jesus himself lived a life of prayer. Whether alone on the mountain side or in the midst of the curious throng at Lazarus' grave, he lifted his heart in prayer to the Father, and was strengthened for the task or the torture before him. That God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, cannot too often be impressed upon the hearts of your pupils—nor upon your own heart. All the vexations and disappointments and discouragements, all the failure and heart-ache and despondency, and likewise all the satisfaction and uplift and joy and success that befall you—take them to the Lord in prayer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What great day did we celebrate in this month? What was the Declaration of Independence? How was our independence gained? The little kingdom of Judah was in danger of losing its independence. The city of Jerusalem was besieged by the army of the great king of Assyria. What was his name?

For Older Pupils. On the anniversary of the day that Napoleon fled from Russia with an army of five hundred thousand, only twenty thousand of whom survived, there is read in the churches in Moscow the account of the destruction of Sennacherib's army. What caused Napoleon's flight and the destruction of his army? What caused the destruction of the Assyrian army? The hand of God is seen in both events. Our lesson is of thrilling interest. To understand it we must get the historical connection. Let us first turn to the Assyrian Empire and see what took place there after Sargon II carried away captive the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. (See the Historical Background.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I MEETING PERIL WITH PRAYER

The Praying King and the Defeated Foe. "Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah?" Thus boastfully wrote Sennacherib in his letter. Well did Hezekiah know his enemy's power. He was in desperate straits, but as Matthew Henry says somewhere of David, "when he was at his wits' end he was not at his faith's end." He took that letter into the Temple and "spread it before Jehovah." "Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear," so the king prayed; "Hear the words of Sennacherib. Of a truth, Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands. O Jehovah, our God, save thou us, I beseech thee, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou Jehovah art God alone."

And the answer came through the prophet Isaiah. "I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." And what was the result? "The angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote the camp of the Assyrians. So Sennacherib departed, and went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh."

Bring Your Difficulties to God in Prayer. The distinguished German philosopher, Fichte, once discussed prayer with Baron von Kottwitz. The child must pray, declared Fichte, but he, a grown man, saw no need of it for himself, his part was to will and to do. "Do you not agree with me?" he questioned, and the Baron answered simply: "When I awake in the morning," he said, "and think of all the duties that I must fulfil during the day and then think how weak I am, and how often I fail in patience and love and wisdom, I cannot do otherwise, I must ask my Heavenly Father to help me! And when at night I lie down to sleep and think of all that I have failed to do or have done wrongly, then I cannot sleep peacefully until I have asked my Heavenly Father to forgive me." "I wish I felt as you do," Fichte answered.

Not long afterwards the philosopher died, and when his will was read it was learned that he had made Baron von Kottwitz the guardian of his only child. Fichte had never seen the Baron save on this one occasion, but so

great was the impression made on him by this interview that he could think of no one to whom he would rather entrust his son than the man who lived in such close communion with God, whom he himself had not learned to love.

The Trouble Clerk. There is some one in telephone offices, or on call there, who is officially termed the Trouble Clerk. If your 'phone doesn't work, or the lines get crossed, you will probably make her acquaintance. You ask Central what to do, and this clerk is called up, and when you have talked it over, a man is sent out to help you. It is a fine thing to know what to do when one gets into trouble. Just go to headquarters. There is One who will make it his business to help you.—He promises it.—"Wellspring."

God Answers Prayer in His Own Way. God is a very present help in trouble, as our Golden Text says, but this does not mean that he will always save one from trouble. It does not mean that every Hezekiah who prays to be saved from defeat will win the battle. The words of General Gordon (as told by Russell H. Conwell in "How to Live the Christian Life") show that defeat is sometimes the best answer.

"General Gordon, of Atlanta, told me how the Confederate troops prayed for victory before the battle of Sharpsburg. The day before the battle they prayed earnestly that they might be victorious, so earnestly that both officers and men felt that their prayers would be answered. General Gordon said that many felt satisfied that the Confederate forces would sweep the Union lines, and would be on their way to Washington within a week. But the next day the battle occurred, and in results it was one of the most crushing blows that the Confederates received during the war. General Gordon, who was shot five times, said that after the battle the men were discouraged. They felt that God was on the side of the largest legions. Some of the officers suggested that it would be better to spend less time in praying and more time in manufacturing bullets and powder. The suggestion seemed a good one even to the general. But he told me years afterward that the prayers of the Confederates on the day before the battle were best answered by defeat; that if the Confederates had captured Washington and defeated the Union our nation would now be far down the scale among the weaker nations of the earth. So God answers prayer in his own way."

[II] GOD IS OUR STRENGTH

The Forty-sixth Psalm and Luther's Hymn. This Psalm commemorates some great deliverance, what one we cannot be certain, but many believe that it commemorates the time when the Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold. Dr. Hugh Macmillan says: "The Psalmist tells the Jews, when they hear about the destruction of the Assyrian army under Sennacherib, not to be carried away by the mere wonder and excitement of the miracle, but to be still in their souls that they may reflect upon and understand the meaning and purposes of this Divine deliverance." Our Golden Text is the first verse of this Psalm: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

In moments when Martin Luther was in despair he would say to his friend Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm," and they would sing his hymn based on this Psalm: *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. Here is Carlyle's translation of two of the stanzas:

A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He'll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient Prince of Hell
Hath risen with purpose fell!
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour,
On earth is not his fellow.

With force of arms we nothing can,
Full soon we were down-ridden;
But for us fights the proper Man,
Whom God himself hath bidden.
Ask ye, Who is the same?
Christ Jesus is his name,
The Lord Zebaoth's Son,
He and no other one
Shall conquer in the battle.

Dr. Alexander Maclaren brings the Psalm home to us in these words: The Psalmist is generalizing the historical fact of the sudden and utter destruction of Sennacherib's host into a universal law. And it is a universal law—true for all generations. Martin Luther might well make this Psalm the battle-cry of the Reformation, and we may well make our own the rugged music and dauntless tone of his rendering of these words.

God Enables us to Bear Great Strain. The mighty Egyptian obelisk was being placed in front of St. Peter's at Rome. A great calamity threatened the thousands of men and horses engaged in the difficult task of moving it, for the ropes were about to snap. The pope had ordered perfect silence, but a sailor, seeing the imminent danger, called out, "Drench the ropes with water." The ropes were drenched, their fiber lost its brittleness, and the obelisk was placed in safety. Thus human lives are enabled to bear the strain of great tasks assigned, for their moral fibers are strengthened beyond the point of breaking by being drenched with strength-giving power through fellowship with God.

Christian Testimony amid Shot and Shell. A sergeant-major of the great European war tells of men after a skirmish quietly hiding away in their dug-outs to whom he sang:

Hidden in the hollow of his blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand,
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest,
Finding, as he promised, perfect peace and rest.

When the sergeant-major added: "That's the best dug-out! It's safe to be hiding there!" a young lad put out his hand and said, "Sir, I'll trust him now."

Trust God's Providence. As you walk along the pavement you cannot fail to notice how differently the separate flagstones of which it is composed dry up after a storm of rain. Some of the stones become clear and white almost at once when the sun shines and the wind draws its sponge over them; others dry up at the corners, and leave the centers wet and black for a long while after; and some continue wholly wet and black, and show no sign of drying for a long time. It is the same sun that shines upon them all; it is the same wind that blows upon all the stones alike. But they produce different effects upon the pavement, according to the smoothness or roughness of the individual stones, the mineral quality of the stones, or the way in which they are arranged; and it is of the greatest importance for the speedy drying up of the pavement which side of the street it happens to be on. The stones of the sunny side become dry and white at once, while those on the shady side are damp and uncomfortable for a good while.

From this homely circumstance you learn the important lesson how differently the minds and hearts of different persons are affected when exposed to the same influences of providence and grace. The sun of God's love, which is always shining upon the evil and the good, causes light or shadow according as our own nature is turned to it. The breeze of God's Spirit purifies and ennobles us, or else passes over our hearts unchanged.—From a Sermon by Dr. Hugh Macmillan.

III I BROUGHT IT TO PASS

Sennacherib's Will and God's. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, God speaks to the proud King of Assyria and says: "Now have I brought it to pass that it should be thine to lay waste fortified cities unto ruinous heaps." In the words of Hegel, "Man executes what he thinks is his own will, and knows not that he is fulfilling God's intent." The arrogant king of the great Assyrian Empire boasted of the many cities he had laid waste—he did not know that he was only fulfilling God's intent that by his hand they should be made ruinous heaps! He wrote to the king of little Judah, "Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given unto the hand of the king of Assyria"—but God decreed that he should return to Nineveh without accomplishing his purpose, and he brought it to pass.

The Real Guide. You have seen a small lad happy in the belief that he is driving a horse; the reins are in his little hands, but over his hands is the strong grasp of the lad's father, and the father's hands are the guiding and controlling power. So God deals with the great men who seemingly control history; the real guide is their heavenly Father.

What We Need. "What we need is a profound faith in God's ruling all things," said General Gordon. John Wesley had that faith when he said, "I read my newspaper to see how God governs the world."

Cromwell had that faith. "What are all our histories," he asked, "but God manifesting himself, that he hath shaken and tumbled down and trampled upon everything that he had not planted?"

Lincoln had that faith. "No human council hath devised nor hath any

human mind worked out these great things," he declared. "They are the most gracious gift of the most high God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy." And again he said: "Now at the end of three years' struggle the nation's condition is not what either party or any man desired or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."

Is that faith ours? Can we say with Dr. Lyman Abbott: "I no longer look back for the evidence that God was in history—though I believe that he was in history—but I look about me to see him in history now"?

God's Hand in the American Constitution. When the convention met in Philadelphia to devise a better constitution for the American government, it seemed at first as if nothing would come of its meeting except an increased bitterness in existing quarrels. The smaller states clung to the colonial idea and the existing plan of government, as that gave each of them equal rights with every other in Congress. The larger states wanted a centralized national government, with a legislature in which each state should have the weight to which its population entitled it. More than a month passed in fruitless wranglings when Franklin made his memorable speech, proposing to ask the aid of the Divine wisdom in their deliberations, and reminding them how that aid had been invoked, and not in vain, by the Continental Congress during its session in that very room. His proposal was not adopted, as it might have given the enemies of the convention an excuse for saying that it was past everything but praying for, but it was not without its effect. A calmer and more reasonable spirit began to characterize the debates. A disposition to mutual concessions took the place of irreconcilable partisanship. And slowly the Constitution was evolved out of the antagonism of opposing theories.

But nobody was content with it, or regarded it with much more than a contemptuous toleration. The colonial party thought it a dangerous scheme for the creation of a strong government, which would land the country in despotism. The national party regarded it at best as the proverbial "half a loaf." Some refused to sign it. The majority did so in Franklin's spirit when he said he would keep his objections to himself, and hope for the best. With what incredulity they would have heard a prediction that the greatest English statesman of the coming century would characterize their work as "the greatest document of its class that ever sprang from the mind of man"! "They builded better than they knew."

It is no stretch of inference to regard the Constitution as the result of God's wise discipline of the country through the troubles which preceded its adoption, and to refer to a Divine wisdom those great originalities which have made it the model for more than a score of later governments.—Robert Ellis Thompson, in "Sunday-School Times."

The Unseen Guide in the Great European War. "Why does not God stop the war?" It does not follow because we cannot see God, or trace his intervention in this war, that he is absent or inactive. He is always at work. He is working now, and through this very war. His will encompasses the contending nations, and acts upon their policies. He is even now intervening in ways we cannot trace. The issues will not be as the Allies or the Austro-German Powers wish. They will be as the All-Father determines, and through chastening and judgment will advance his purposes in the earth. Things will change dramatically; but the change when it comes will not really be sudden. It will be the culmination of the pressures of pierced hands upon international affairs. God's Spirit is striving with men, weakening and strengthening, blinding and enlightening, depressing and encouraging, leading one to the victory that means defeat, and another to the defeat that paves the way for victory.

We can find no profounder or more satisfactory teaching in God's moral government of the world than the Prophet Habakkuk gives us. He was living in Jerusalem about 608 B.C., just when the Chaldeans were rising into power and threatening Israel. "How long, O Lord," he says in despair, "shall I cry and thou wilt not hear? I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save." Jehovah answers him that the Chaldeans are an in-

strument of judgment. They are terrible and dreadful, it is true, and more fierce than the ravening wolves; they scoff at kings and deride every stronghold, and their might is their god. But a strong weapon is needed to do the work appointed them. The prophet replies, But meanwhile what is to become of the righteous? Are they to be destroyed with the guilty? The reply of Jehovah implies what Jeremiah explicitly says (Jer. 5.11-19) that the righteous are not so righteous as they think themselves to be. They, too, have sinned, and need the chastening which the Eternal Love will not withhold from the children it is resolute to save and perfect. As for the Chaldeans, when their work is done, they shall be destroyed, and their pride shall be their ruin. "Though it tarry, wait for it." The just man by his moral steadfastness and integrity shall be preserved alive.

The answer satisfied Habakkuk, and he was able to close his prophecy with a declaration of unshaken faith in the control and love of God. Shall we, who stand in the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, be less assured?

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

—From an Editorial in "The Sunday School Chronicle."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 20. Daily prayers help to lessen daily cares.—Spurgeon.

Verse 20. Trouble and perplexity drive me to prayer, and prayer drives away trouble and perplexity.—Melancthon.

Verse 23. Man proposes, but God disposes.—Russian Ambassador to Napoleon.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"If a letter is not grave enough to be spread before God, it is too small to annoy us."

This world is not governed by chance. We need a profound faith in God's over-ruling, not only in the larger issues of history, but in the lesser issues of individual lives. Never had we greater need to pray:

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The hand of God in history. See the Third Topic; "St. Paul's Philosophy of History," "Contemporary Review," Sept. 1907; "Religion Still the Key of History," "American Historical Review," Jan., 1907.

2. God is our strength. See the Second Topic; "A Mighty Fortress," "The Outlook," Aug. 15, 1914.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is the theme of Isa. 54.1-56.8? (*Guide*, p. 282.) 2. What was the primary purpose of the appeal in chapter 55? (*Guide*, p. 282.) 3. Describe how water is sold in Palestine today. (*Guide*, p. 282.) 4. What is said about the water of salvation in Isa. 12.3? 5. When is the time that Jehovah may be found according to Jer. 29.13? 6. With verse 9 compare Ps. 36.5, 6. 7. With verse 10 compare 2 Cor. 9.10. 8. Look up these verses in which nature is represented as rejoicing with men: Isa. 44.23; 49.13; 52.9; Ps. 98.8.

Questions to Think About. 1. What does it mean "to thirst for God"? 2. What do the figures of speech in verse 1 mean? 3. For what do *water*, *wine*, *milk* stand? 4. What is meant by "spending money for that which is not bread"? 5. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life": finish that verse and explain its meaning. 6. For what does "fatness" stand, verse 2? (*Guide*, p. 281.) 7. What is meant by "the sure mercies of David"? (*Guide*, p. 281.) 8. Explain verses 8 and 9. (*Guide*, p. 281.) 9. Explain verses 10 and 11. (*Guide*, p. 281.) 10. What does "void" mean? 11. Explain verse 12. (*Guide*, p. 281.) 12. What two cautions does our text give?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Isa. 12.3; Jn. 4.10; 7.37. In your Note-Book write "IV. Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah."

GOD'S GRACIOUS INVITATION

Golden Text

'Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Isaiah 55:6

LESSON Isaiah 55: verses 1-11 printed MEMORIZE verses 1, 2

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3 Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. 4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples. 5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

6 Seek ye Jehovah, while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. 7 let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; 11 so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Great Proclamation, 1-5.

1. God's Blessings Free, 1.
2. Material Prosperity Unsatisfactory, 2.
3. God's Everlasting Covenant, 3-5.

II. Cautions, 6-9.

1. Neglect not the Opportunity, 6, 7.
2. Judge not Divine Ways by Human Ways, 8, 9.

III. God's Promises are Sure, 10-13.

1. He will Fulfil his Purpose, 10, 11.
2. The Return Assured, 12, 13.

1. *Every one that thirsteth.* Every one who is conscious of his spiritual needs: compare Isa. 41:17; 44:3; Ps. 42:2; 63:1.—*To the waters.* To God, who is the source of spiritual and material blessings.—*Wine and milk.* Metaphors for spiritual blessings: compare the use of such metaphors in Isa. 12:3; Jn. 4:10; 7:37-39.—*Without money and without price.* He who feels his need may freely receive. See "Light from Oriental Life." Samuel Rutherford speaks of this verse as setting before us "the poor man's market."

"'Tis heaven alone that is given away;

'Tis only God may be had for the asking."

The whole chapter is remarkable for the number of its figures of speech. Such figures speak a universal language, for they express facts of nature which have the same meaning for every heart.

2. *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?* In Babylon the Israelites were working and spending, but gaining only material neces-

saries and luxuries while their souls were starving. See Jn. 6.27.—*Labor. Or, earnings, RVm.—And eat ye. And ye shall eat.—Let your soul delight itself in fatness. Fatness is figuratively used for prosperity, well-being.*

3. *And I will make an everlasting covenant.* "All that is required on the part of Israel is hearing, and coming, and taking: let it do this, and it will be pervaded by new life; and Jehovah will meet it with an everlasting covenant." A covenant usually means a mutual agreement between two: here it is rather a promise on the part of God.—*The sure mercies of David.* The true mercies promised to David. See Ps. 89.35. "They are called *sure* as being inviolable—mercies which had both been realized in the case of David himself, and would be realized still further, inasmuch as they will endure for an everlasting future" (Delitzsch).

4. *I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander of the peoples.* Does this verse look back to the history of David, or forward to the history of Christ? It is a much disputed question. Kirkpatrick gives the various answers: "(a) Most modern authorities hold that the person spoken of in verse 4 is the historical David, and that verses 4 and 5 institute a parallel between the position he occupied in the heathen world of his time and that which Israel will occupy in the future; the thought expressed, therefore, is that the Messianic hope is transferred from the dynasty to the nation. The view is thus succinctly stated by Driver: 'As David became ruler of subject nations, a knowledge of his religion, however imperfect, spread among them; thus he was a "witness" to them. This position of David is idealized in Ps. 18.43, and the position, as thus idealized, is here enlarged and extended in a spiritual sense to Israel.' (b) Others think that the reference in verse 4 is to the future Messianic king, so that the two verses repeat under two aspects the future greatness of Israel. (c) An intermediate aspect is taken by some, viz., that verse 4 goes back to the promise made to David, but regards it as one destined to be fulfilled in the person of his son the Messiah. It is very difficult to decide between these conflicting explanations. The third view (c) seems on the whole the best; the original covenant guarantees an endless dominion to the family of David, and after the restoration this will assume a special character and expand into universal empire in the reign of the Messiah."

5. *Thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not.* Israel, too, shall be for a witness to the peoples.—*A nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God.* "Israel is destined to receive the homage of the heathen, who will seek to attach themselves to the favored people of so potent a Deity" (Wade).

6-7. The fulfilment of God's promises depends upon the people's fulfilment of his commands.—*While he may be found.* "Now that he is to be found." Compare Isa. 49.8; Jer. 29.12-14.—*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* "The way" and the "thoughts," or purposes, of the ungodly, mean the polytheism and immorality which marked a large section of the Jewish exiles" (Cheyne).

8-9. "Jehovah's thoughts transcend those of man as much as the heaven is higher than the earth. The point of contrast is not the moral quality of the Divine thoughts as opposed to those of the 'wicked'; the thoughts and ways of Jehovah are his purposes of redemption, which are too vast and sublime to be measured by the narrow concepts of despairing minds" (Skinner). Compare Ps. 36.5, 6.

10-11. As certainly as rain and snow fulfil their purpose, so certainly will God fulfil his promise.—*Returneth not thither.* They do not return to the sky in the form of vapor until after they have fulfilled the purpose of their falling on the earth.—*But watereth.* Without having watered.—*Seed to the sower and bread to the eater.* Compare 2 Cor. 9.10.—*That goeth forth out of my mouth.* Through the agency of his prophet.—*Void.* Without having accomplished its purpose.

12. *For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.* The return from exile in Babylon is "the thing whereto Jehovah sent," his word. This return shall not be in haste, as was the flight from Egypt of their fathers.—*The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing.* All nature rejoices with them. Compare Isa. 44.23; 49.13; 52.9; Ps. 98.8.—*All the trees of the field shall clap their hands.* Hands here stand for branches; in Ps. 98.8, for waves.

13. Here the condition of Israel after the Return is described.—*Instead of the thorn.* Of the wilderness, the misery of the Exile.—*It shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign.* "The transformation of the desert is designed to be a permanent memorial of what the Lord had done for his people. *Sign* has the sense of *memorial* or *monument* in Josh. 4:6; Num. 16:38, and *name* perhaps has a similar meaning in Isa. 56:5; Gen. 11:4; 2 S. 8:13" (Wade).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and him that hath no money, come ye, buy.* In oriental countries good drinking water is scarce and it often

has to be bought. Water sellers are familiar figures in Palestine today. The one here depicted is carrying two metal cups in his hands which he strikes together to announce his coming, and he calls out, "Ho, ye thirsty ones, come ye and drink," but he does not add, "without money and without price." The water is brought from a distant spring.

The vessel in which it is kept is of porous clay, and its evaporation keeps the water cool. The man seated on his feet is drinking water out of an earthenware drinking bottle, called *bakbook*, as James Neil tells us, because, on account of its narrow neck, the water, when poured out, comes with just this gurgling sound, "*bakbook, bakbook.*" The vessel is always held about a foot away from the mouth, and in this way any number of persons can drink in succession without touching the bottle with their lips.



THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When did Jesus say, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink"? What did he say about himself and living water? Who, did he say, should never thirst? What did Jesus mean by these figures of speech? Recall the words of Jesus about himself as the bread of life, a lesson of last quarter. What did a recent lesson text say about God's mercy?

Three Addresses. In Isaiah 54, 55 and the first eight verses of 56 we have three addresses which evidently belong to the time when the exile in Babylon was drawing to a close. Chapter 54 promises the restoration of the exiles to their kingdom, the re-establishment of the city of Jerusalem. Chapter 55 is an invitation to all to partake of these blessings which God has covenanted, and an exhortation to obedience, to the putting away of all evil. God's promise is sure. Chapter 56:1-8 proclaims that the privileges in the restored Jerusalem shall be for all.

The Purpose of the Appeal in Chapter 55. Dr. George Adam Smith gives its purpose in these words: "The commercial character of the opening figures of the chapter arrests the attention. Babylon was the center of the world's trade, and it was in Babylon that the Jews first formed those mercantile habits which have become, next to religion, or in place of religion, their national character. Born to be priests, the Jews drew down their splendid powers of attention, pertinacity, and imagination from God upon the world, till they equally appear to have been born traders. They labored and prospered exceedingly, gathering property and settling in comfort, and in too many instances, abandoned the religion of their forefathers for that of their new land and home. From this eager pursuit of material and perishable prosperity, the prophet seeks for his

appeal to win them to the blessings of God's eternal covenant with the citizens of restored Jerusalem. The wealth of Babylon will not satisfy the soul's cravings."

For Babylon see Lesson IX of this Quarter.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

There is a heartening thought for teachers in the eleventh verse. As snow and rain do not return as vapor to the sky until after they have accomplished the purpose of their descent, so the word of God will not return without having attained the end for which it was sent. Through the mouths of his witnesses, God's word shall not return to him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it. It shall soften or refresh the soil of the human heart and render it productive of good fruit. We cannot see the processes by which the earth is rendered productive. The rain penetrates below noiselessly, and noiselessly it circulates through trunk and stem and leaf—noiselessly to us, but naturalists tell us that were our hearing keen enough we should hear the forests in spring roaring with the movement of the sap like the waves of the sea. So the effect of our words upon the hearts that hear them is hidden from us, but could we see as God sees, we should know that they are not spoken in vain. "What is the good of teaching my class Sunday after Sunday?" many a teacher questions in his heart. Here is the answer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Have you ever been very thirsty? Cans of fresh water are kept in lifeboats: why? Have you read how shipwrecked sailors have suffered with thirst? What happens if they drink the water of the ocean? We cannot appreciate how intense is the suffering, the agony, of those who perish from thirst, for we have never had to go very long without water. But the word *thirst* expresses the most intense desire. We use it to express our desire for other good things as well as for water to quench physical thirst. One of the Beatitudes begins, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst": what is the rest? What does it mean to "thirst after righteousness"? It is this kind of thirst which our lesson tells us how to satisfy. What must every one that thirsts do?

For Older Pupils. By questions recall Jesus' teaching about himself as the Water of Life, our Lesson for March 11, and as the Bread of Life, the Lesson for February 11, and have the figures explained.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE CALL TO THE THIRSTY

My Soul Thirsteth for God, for the Living God. There are thirsts which infallibly point to their true objects. If a man is hungry he knows that it is food that he wants. And just as the necessities of the animal life are incapable of being misunderstood, and the objects which will satisfy them incapable of being confused or mistaken, so there are other nobler thirsts, which, in like manner, work automatically, and point to the thing that they need. We have social instincts; we need love; we need friendship; we need somebody to lean upon; we thirst for some heart to rest our heads upon, for hands to clasp ours; and we know where the creatures and the objects are that will satisfy these desires. And a man knows where and how to gratify the impulse that drives him to seek after the many forms of knowledge and wisdom.

But besides all these, besides sense, besides affection, besides emotions, besides the intellectual spur of which we are all more or less conscious, there come in a whole set of other thirsts that do not in themselves carry the intimation of the place where they can be slaked. And so you get men restless, as some of you are; always dissatisfied, as some of you are; feeling that there is something wanting, yet not knowing what, as some of you are.

What you want is God. Nothing else, nothing less. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." The man who knows what it is of which he is in such sore need is blessed. The man who only feels dimly that he needs something, and does not know that it is God whom he does need, is condemned to wander in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, and where his heart gapes, parched and cracked like the soil upon which he treads. Under-

stand your thirst. Interpret your desires aright. Open your eyes to your need; and be sure of this, that mountains of money and the clearest insight into intellectual problems, and fame, and love, and wife, and children, and a happy home, and an abundance of all things that you can desire, will leave a central aching emptiness that nothing and no person but God can ever fill.—Condensed from "The Book of Isaiah," by Dr. Alexander MacLaren.

Dormant Thirsts. Aye! but there are *dormant* thirsts, too. It is no proof of superiority that a savage has fewer wants than you and I have, for the want is the open mouth into which supply comes. And it is no proof that you have not, deep in your nature, desires which, unless they are satisfied, will prevent your being blessed, that these desires are all unconscious to yourselves.

Some of you do not wish forgiveness. Many of you would much rather not have holiness. You do not want to have God. The promises of the Gospel go over your heads, and are as impotent to influence you as the wind whistling through a keyhole, because you have never been aware of the wants to which these promises correspond, and do not understand what it is that you truly require.

And yet there is no desire—that is to say, consciousness of necessities—so dormant but that its being ungratified makes a man restless. You do not wish forgiveness but you will never be happy till you get it. You do not wish to be good and true and holy men, but you will never be blessed till you are. You do not want to have God, some of you, but you will be restless till you find him. You fancy you wish heaven when you are dead; you do not want it while you are living. But until your earthly life is like the life of Jesus Christ in heaven, though in an inferior degree, while it is on earth, you will never be at rest. You are thirsty enough after these things to be ill at ease without them, when you bethink yourselves and pass out of the region of mere mechanical and habitual existence; but until you get these things which you do not desire, be sure of this: that you will be tortured with vain unrest, and will find that the satisfactions which you do seek turn to ashes in your mouth.—Dr. Alexander MacLaren.

Seek Ye Jehovah While He May be Found. In my university days at Edinburgh there was a young medical student named Macfarlane. He was one of our finest athletes, and everybody liked him. One day he was stricken with typhoid, which proved fatal. Macfarlane in his days of boisterous health had neglected his Lord, and when one of his friends, visiting him in his sickness, led his thoughts to the Savior, he turned and said, "But wouldn't it be a shabby thing to turn to Christ now?" "Yes," replied his friend, "it will be a shabby thing, but it will be shabbier not to turn to him at all!" And I believe that poor Macfarlane turned his shame-filled soul to the Lord.

But it *is* shabby to offer our Lord the mere dregs in life's cup. It *is* shabby to offer him the mere hull of the boat when the storms of passion have carried its serviceableness away. Let me offer him my best, my finest equipment, my youth! Let me offer him the best, and give him the helm when I am just setting sail and life abounds in golden promise! "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

II SPENDING MONEY FOR THAT WHICH IS NOT BREAD

The Spirit of Babylon Entered into Israel. Look through the symbols of Ezekiel, and you can see the streets and lanes of the exiles: "chariots like whirlwinds," "horses swifter than eagles," "horses and chariots," "horsemen with spears and burnished helmets," all suggesting the street rush and the irresistible power of the triumphant city. Go into the Book of Daniel, and you can hear its gaiety and its revelry: "the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer." You can see its spacious estuary crowded with shipping, laden with the produce of India and Arabia, and the wealth of distant Britain. Ezekiel has described it as a "land of traffic," "a city of merchants," keen, intense, open-eyed, and pushful, the emphasis of its life gathered round its trade.

In all the crowded interests there was nothing suggestive of God. In all the rushing, hurrying moments there was nothing significant of the coming and going of God. The exile felt the glamor, but in the glamor forgot his God. The glitter allured him. He became a trafficker, and plunged his soul

in trade. The instinct of the dealer rapidly matured. His vision was more and more horizontal, and less and less vertical. The spirit of Babylon entered into Israel. Success was enthroned in place of holiness, and the soul bowed down and worshiped it. The exile embraced the world, and shut out the infinite.

Now, what was the issue of that? The exile made money. He amassed possessions. He climbed into positions of eminence and power. His body luxuriated; the soul languished. He drenched the body with comforts; he couldn't appease its tenant. He spent money and more money, but was never able to buy the appropriate bread. He plunged into increased labors, but his labors reaped only that "which satisfied not." The body toiled, the brain schemed, the eyes coveted, and still the soul cried out, "I thirst."

—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "Apostolic Optimism."

To Be Better Off is not to Be Better! Mr. Dan Crawford in talking about his beloved Africans, said: Down in the south there is a certain kind of civilization advancing, that civilization that brings drink, gambling, and all the rest with it. It was down that way that I went when I was starting out for England, down there by the railway head, where I and my black friends bade each other good-bye. Oh, how they looked at that railway! Then they asked me to explain to them about some of the things belonging to your so-called civilization. So I began gushing about all your wonderful civilization. How they looked and listened! As I went on telling them of automobiles, submarines, aeroplanes, and everything else, trying to draw a wondering look from them—and how I piled it on!—I noticed one man with an uncomfortable look in his eyes. I could see he was waiting for me the way a cat waits for a rat. Finally he said as I stopped, "Are you finished?" and then, dear friends, he punctured my tire with a bang. I will never forget it. He said, "To be better off is not to be better!"

Money Spent in the Pursuit of Pleasure Does Not Feed the Soul. Once in a new book she came across a little tale of a man who lived in Persia, frantically pursuing sensation. Entering one day the courtyard of his house, he heard a sigh behind him, and looking around, saw his own spirit apparently in the act of breathing its last. The little thing, dry and white, was opening and shutting its mouth for all the world like an oyster trying to breathe. "What is it? You don't seem well," he said. And his spirit answered: "It's all right. Don't distress yourself. I've been crowded out, that's all." And with a wheeze the little thing went flat.—John Galesworthy, in "The Little Man."

The Truly Fortunate People. Two men were talking about old friends. "Tom has made his pile," said one of them. "That's his place on Crescent Avenue. They say Tom's boy is making the money fly. Tom married Grace Fuller for her father's share in the business, but I never thought his home life was the pleasantest in the world. Tom wouldn't feel that, though, as much as some would. Just a place to snatch his meals and catch a wink of sleep and rush off again—that'd be Tom's idea of a home."

"I visited Wallace Graham down at Forest City," the other man remarked. "Wallace is an elder in the little church down there, and I guess that's the only office that ever came his way. He's running an engine yet, but they have a snug little home. Wallace and Annie are all bound up in their children. One morning I picked up a book that Annie had left on the table. She had marked this sentence in it: 'The truly fortunate people are not those who succeed in life, but those who succeed in living.' I think that fits the Grahams' case exactly."

"Is not the life more than meat?" the first friend quoted thoughtfully. "When you stop to think about it, what a lot of people never cultivate the art of living—never seem to see that it's a thing in itself!"—"Youth's Companion."

III GOD'S THOUGHTS AND MAN'S THOUGHTS

God's Thoughts and Man's Thoughts. God's thinking is in no degree like human thinking. Men think logically; they think deductively, from a larger premise through a smaller one to a conclusion. Or men think inductively, from a small to a broader and wider conception of some great truth, until that great truth itself flashes in upon them, and the knowledge grows. Men's thinking is practically groping inch by inch through darkness, seeking more

light and gaining more as the process proceeds. Hence, human thinking is always fallible; men think in a limited way, with limited knowledge and with limited faculties, and consequently, the thinking of man is always liable to error. There is no liability to error in the mind of the great Intellect, the Infinite Mind out of whose wisdom and power all things spring. God does not think, God does not syllogize or reason as we do; God *knows*. No human process of thinking with him—he knows. That is all that can be said: he knows everything to the very heart of it, he understands it altogether, and there is no fallibility at all with him.—Andrew Benvie, in a Sermon.

Human and Divine Views of Success and Failure. At the close of the grand drama of Job, God pronounces judgment. He speaks out of the whirlwind and gives answer to the difficulties raised in the dialogues. Summarizing the verdict we learn: Man's ways and God's ways are not alike. Man's judgment is partial, God's is complete. Man can only see "the outskirts of God's ways." God would have man be righteous; the rest man must leave to God. The plans of the Eternal are beyond man's finding out. If success attend righteousness, it is well; if failure attend it, it is also well, though, from the human standpoint, it may not be so well. But success or failure is insignificant with God; righteousness is all-important. Job's friends are, therefore, rebuked and in Job God finds no unrighteousness.

What a revelation at such a period of the world's history! Men have been believing that affliction, trouble, poverty, suffering, sickness, were evidences of God's displeasure; that one who was passing under these yokes must have been wicked or they never would have come to him. Now our author ventures to assert, in God's name, that, in a man suffering every conceivable misfortune, there was no unrighteousness, that his adversity was not a proof of God's disfavor, that, on the contrary, in spite of failure Job was a chosen servant of God.

Israel's faith is not wedded to the belief that every venture must be followed by success in order to be assured of the good-will of God. To do our part is the imperative obligation; success or failure in our lifetime must be left to a higher Power. My contention today is that we should cease worshipping "the great god, Success," that we cease regarding Success as an idol, that we begin to realize that a man is greater than a thing, that though fortune be broken we are assured of God's approval if conscience is whole, that though we are failures from the view-point of the market we may be glowing successes from the standpoint of God. We need to reconstruct our philosophy of life. To bring our work to a blessed fruition is a desirable hope and a worthy aspiration; to believe that failure to attain our ends, as the world counts failure, means that God disapproves our lives, is a false and pernicious view.—Condensed from a Sermon by Rabbi J. Leonard Levy.

Human and Divine Thoughts of Forgiveness. If we could measure the height of the heavens above the earth; if we could attach ourselves to some angel-aeronaut who would pilot us through space to where Uranus and Neptune burn in golden glory; if we could pass beyond these, across the dark vault to the nearest fixed star; if we could reach the boundary of space, where the waves of ether break on their silent shores—we should begin to appreciate the abundance of God's forgiveness. "He will abundantly pardon; for my thoughts are not your thoughts . . . saith the Lord."

If sin, like the dark waters of the Deluge, covered earth's highest mountains, grace in its abundant provisions would be as much above and beyond it as the heavens were above the floods, when they were at their worst. Thus all our comparisons fail, and there is no parallel between our notions of forgiveness and God's. We cannot realize the completeness of his abundant pardon, nor the full measure of the oblivion of our iniquities. He remembers them no more! What absolute and complete forgiveness!

The prodigal thinks that he can at the most expect to receive only a stinted pardon and a servant's fare. But the father runs, falls on his neck, and kisses him; clothes him with sumptuous dress, and seats him at the table with royal prodigality of love. When God forgives, he forgets; he blots out our iniquities as a cloud; he does not treat us as pardoned criminals, but takes us to his heart as beloved sons; he imputes to us the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ as our robe.—F. B. Meyer.

Judge me not as I judge myself, O Lord!
Show me some mercy, or I may not live:
Let the good in me go without reward;
Forgive the evil I must not forgive.—William Dean Howells.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. First of all there has to be a discipline of the ear; there has to be a determined and resolute effort to listen to God.—J. H. Jowett.

Verse 5. That is the true imperialism—empire by moral and spiritual sovereignty, allurements and dominion by the fascinating radiance of a pure and sanctified life.—J. H. Jowett.

Verse 5. They who have themselves drunk of the unfailing fountain in Christ are thereby fitted and called to cry to others, "Come ye to the waters."—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 12. The transition from joy to peace is the change from a rapid river to a deep ocean: in its settled calm, the ocean has more energy than the river.—George Matheson.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Suppose there was an advertisement in tomorrow morning's papers that any one that liked to go to a certain place might get a fortune for going, what a queue of waiting supplicants there would be at the door! Here is God's greatest gift going a-begging: have you taken the offer?—Dr. Maclaren.

"The root of all sin lies in these two strong, simple words, 'Your thoughts not mine; your ways not mine.'"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The mission of a truly great people—to be a witness, a leader, a commander.
2. God's ways and man's. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the name of the son of Sennacherib who succeeded to the throne of Assyria? 2. What was the name of Sennacherib's grandson? 3. Who was the king of Assyria, verse 11? 4. Whose son was Manasseh? 5. How old was Manasseh when he became king, and how long did he reign? (2 Ch. 33.1.) 6. Read the parallel account of Manasseh's reign in 2 K. 21. 7. What were some of the wicked things that Manasseh and his people did? 8. What were "the host of heaven" that Manasseh worshiped, verse 3? 9. What warnings had the king and people received? 10. How was Manasseh punished? 11. What do the Assyrian monuments tell us about the treatment of captives? (*Guide*, p. 289.) 12. About Assurbanipal's clemency? (*Guide*, p. 289.) 13. What led to Manasseh's restoration to his kingdom? 14. For what is Manasseh held accountable in Jer. 15.4? 15. What was the extent of the Assyrian Empire in Manasseh's reign? (*Guide*, p. 289.)

Questions to Think About. 1. By whom did Jehovah speak to Manasseh and the people? (2 K. 21.10.) 2. To what verse does Ps. 51.17 apply? 3. What kind of man was Manasseh's father? 4. Was Manasseh a good or a bad king? 5. What was Manasseh's influence over Judah? 6. Can one do evil deeds without affecting others? 7. What led Manasseh to repent? 8. What great parable of Jesus does Manasseh's repentance in his distress call to mind? 9. How did he show that his repentance was genuine? 10. How did Zaccheus show his true repentance?

Questions upon the Book of Isaiah. 1. What four great prophets lived in the eighth century B. C.? 2. Who wrote the Book of Isaiah? 3. What can you say about the Prophet Isaiah as a statesman? An orator? A prophet? A writer? 4. What four great ideas are there in his writing? 5. What is the message of "The Great Unknown"? 6. How have others ranked the book as literature? 7. What are its lessons for today? (For answers to these questions see pages 35-39 of our Introduction.)

Note-Book Work. Write "V. God's Gracious Invitation through the Prophet Isaiah."

MANASSEH'S SIN AND REPENTANCE

Golden Text

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Isaiah 55:7.

LESSON II Chronicles 33:1-20: verses 9-16 printed

MEMORIZE verses 12, 13

9 And Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they did evil more than did the nations whom Jehovah destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And Jehovah spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they gave no heed. 11 Wherefore Jehovah brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. 12 And when he was in distress he besought Jehovah his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13 And he prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that Jehovah he was God.

14 Now after this he built an outer wall to the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance at the fish gate; and he compassed Ophel about *with it*, and raised it up to a very great height: and he put valiant captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 And he took away the foreign gods, and the idol out of the house of Jehovah, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of Jehovah, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. 16 And he built up the altar of Jehovah, and offered thereon sacrifices of peace-offerings and of thanksgiving, and commanded Judah to serve Jehovah, the God of Israel.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Sowing Wild Oats, 1-9.
- II. Reaping the Sowing, 10, 11.
- III. The Prodigal's Repentance, 12, 13.
- IV. Bringing forth Fruits of Repentance, 14-20.

9. *Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* See the "Historical Background." In Jer. 15:4 the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile are laid at Manasseh's door: "I will cause them to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem."—*They did evil.* The evil is chronicled in the first seven verses.—*The nations whom Jehovah destroyed before the children of Israel.* The original inhabitants of the land.

10. *Jehovah spake to Manasseh, and to his people.* Through his servants the prophets, 2 K. 21:10.

11. *The captains of the host of the king of Assyria.* The king was probably Assurbanipal (though possibly his father Esar-haddon), and the expression indicates that he sent his army but did not go himself.

12. *When he was in distress, he besought Jehovah.* He came to himself then, like the Prodigal Son.

13. *And heard his supplication.* A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Ps. 51:17.—*Brought him again to Jerusalem unto his kingdom.* Through the agency of the Assyrian king, who was prompted to restore him to his kingdom. See p. 289.

14-16. *Even to the entrance of the fish gate.* See p. 290.—*Commanded Judah to serve Jehovah.* Judah failed to continue to serve Jehovah.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *Worshiped all the host of heaven.* That cult was Babylonian, and its adoption at this time by Jerusalem was due to the political and social subjection of Judah to Assyria. The host of heaven were the sun, moon and stars, and at this time they probably added to the significance of one of the most sacred names of the God of Israel, Jehovah of Hosts, which had originally meant "God of the armies of Israel." But because belief in them as real deities had not died out of Israel it was the more easy to introduce their worship into Jerusalem. The first reasons for this were doubtless political. Their altars and rites were the official acknowledging of the subjection of the Jewish state to the Empire, among whose most popular deities was Ishtar, the planet Venus, "queen of heaven." That the mass of the population of Jerusalem readily yielded to the attractions of a worship with which so many of their native instincts and conceptions of the universe were in sympathy, is proved by the evidence alike of the prophets, the legislators, and the annalists of Judah. The Book of Deuteronomy twice especially distinguishes the host of heaven as objects which Israel must not let themselves be drawn away to adore. The site of the city, high and open to heaven—within view, too, of the long edge of the Moabite plateau over which the moon and the planets rise with impressive majesty—was particularly suitable for a worship conducted without idols, by direct adoration of its heavenly objects, and by offerings so simple as to be within reach of the poorest worshippers.—George Adam Smith, in "Jerusalem."

11. *Who took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.* Recall Assurbanipal's inscription, p. 272.

The Assyrian treatment of captives is illustrated on several Assyrian reliefs now in the British Museum. On the front of a monolith found in the Taurus range there is a representation of Esar-haddon in his royal robes; the negro kneeling at his feet, with hands and feet bound with fetters, represents Tirkakah, king of Egypt and Ethiopia. The standing figure is probably the king Sam'al. See p. 313.

13. *Brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.* An interesting account in the Assyrian inscriptions shows that such clemency was in accord with Assurbanipal's policy. Necho, the vassal king of Memphis and Sais, had joined Tirkakah in his revolt against Assyria and had been brought to Nineveh in chains. The inscription gives Assurbanipal's words in regard to his restoration to his country. "To Necho . . . of them, favor I granted him . . . costly garments I placed upon him, ornaments of gold, his royal image I made for him, bracelets of gold I fastened on his limbs, a steel sword, its sheath of gold, in the glory of my name, more than I write, I gave him. Chariots, horses, and mules, for his royal riding, I appointed him. My generals as governors to assist with him I sent."



THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the first king of Judah about whom we have studied this year? Was he a good or a bad king? Who was the next king? What sort of king was he? What promise was made in our last lesson to those who turned from sin to God? How does an inscription say that Assurbanipal treated a prisoner?

Judah Subject to Assyria. Jerusalem was saved from capture by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's reign (our lesson two weeks ago), but Judah either remained a subject kingdom of Assyria or was made one soon after Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, came to the throne. During Manasseh's reign all western Asia and Egypt were included in the great Assyrian Empire. An inscription on a triumphal stele of Esar-haddon (son of Sennacherib and king of Assyria 680-668 B.C.) gives a list of twenty-two tributary kings who furnished building material

for his new palace, and among them is "Manasseh, king of the country of Judah." Assurbanipal (son of Esar-haddon and king of Assyria 668-626 B.C.)



Clay Impression
from Seal of
Esar-haddon

declares on an inscription that "In the course of my expedition (to Egypt and Ethiopia) twenty-two kings of the side of the sea and middle of the sea, all tributaries depended upon me, to my presence came and kissed my feet." Manasseh's name is on the list of these kings, given on another inscription. Another evidence of Assyrian influence in Judah has recently been discovered at Gezer on two tablets, deeds of the sale of land in 651 and 649 B.C. Fields belonging to a man with a Jewish name were sold and the sales registered in the Assyrian language and in the one case the notary bore the Assyrian name of Nergalsharusur.

Manasseh's Sins. Manasseh became king of Judah at twelve years of age, and his long reign of fifty-five years was an evil one. He adopted the worship of the heathen nations about him: rebuilt the high places for worship which his father Hezekiah had labored to destroy: erected altars for the worship of false gods; worshiped the heavenly bodies: desecrated the holy temple with heathen altars; made his children suffer in the heathen rites he practised: engaged in augury, enchantments, sorcery: had friendly dealings with wizards: and even put an image of an idol, made by human hands, in the house of God: broke the covenant which God had made with his people, for its blessings depended on their keeping his laws: and led Judah astray so that they did worse than the heathen nations.

Judah's Apostasy. Throughout the history of Judah we see that the people readily followed their king. The great religious reforms of Hezekiah were quickly succeeded in his son's reign by a revival of heathen idolatry. Under Hezekiah the people had grown to a higher spiritual stature than under any previous king. Under Manasseh, his son, the process was reversed. How could the change take place so rapidly, one has questioned, and then has added that we can ask exactly the same question of the history of England in the years following the Restoration: "What had become of the spirit of the Puritans, of the moral temper of Cromwell and of Milton, in the years when Pepys, in his 'Diary,' was recording his own and the nation's deterioration?" Dr. George Adam Smith explains that "we must recall the congenital heathenism of Jerusalem on which Ezekiel insists: the prevalence of such forms of worship all around Judah, but especially in Samaria; and also the probable addition to the population from the Judean towns devastated by Sennacherib in which Canaanite cults still survived, from the Palestine and Phœnician cities that had suffered by the campaigns of Esar-haddon and Assurbanipal, and from the great increase in trade under the Assyrian Lordship of Western Asia."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For the *Valley of the Son of Hinnom*, see p. 256.

The *Fish Gate* was in the north wall of Jerusalem, and is supposed to have been so named because fish were brought through it from Tyre.

When Manasseh was taken captive to Babylon he did not go directly east across the desert, but went through Syria northeastward to the Euphrates, and then down the route of that river to *Babylon*. See the map. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, but Babylon had been conquered by Tilgath-pilneser and during most of the time afterward until the overthrow of the Assyrian power in 607 B.C. it was in subjection to Assyria. At this time Assurbanipal frequently resided here.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSONS

For Younger Pupils. In a Sunday-school in Japan the lesson one day was about Manasseh. On the wall there hung a large colored picture of the king, a prisoner in chains in a foreign land. The uplifted head and hands showed that he was praying. "Why was the king put in prison?" the teacher asked. "He sinned," answered a little boy. "And do you know what sin is?" "It is giving up to the evil one." "What is the king doing?" "He is praying." "And what is prayer?" "It is talking to God." "Did God hear him?" "Yes, and he sent him back to his own country." That little

Japanese boy knew this story well which is ours today. Manasseh sinned, said the Japanese boy. Who was Manasseh?

For Older Pupils. Twice a day the boatmen on the river Trent, England, send up throughout the river's course a cry of warning that the great tidal wave, or bore, is coming. The incoming tide from the ocean enters the Humber River, and when it meets the narrower Trent it can no longer spread out as it has been doing, and so it rises on top of the stream which is flowing in the other direction into the Humber. As it advances with a terrible roar up stream, it rises higher and higher, a wall of seemingly angry water with foaming crest, five or six feet high at Gainsborough. It comes so swiftly and with such force that any boats left unanchored are wrecked. The words of warning which the boatmen shout one to another have a strange sound to us. They are "Ware Ægir!" Beware the Ægir! It is a cry that comes down from the times when the pagan Danes invaded England. They could not understand this fierce tidal wave; they thought it must be a god, and they named it Ægir.

Again and again in the history of Judah and Israel we see their kings turning to false gods and hear their prophets bidding them beware their Ægirs. Which of the kings of Judah about whom we have studied were guilty of worshipping false gods? One of the worst idolaters was the king of our lesson. What is his name? Who was his father? What sort of king was his father?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I WORSE THAN THE HEATHEN

Sinning against Light. The Prophetical writers often speak of the idolatrous practices of the people with the greatest scorn. They point out how much Jehovah had done for his people, how he had saved them from slavery in Egypt, how he had brought them to the promised land, how he had destroyed the nations before them in that land, how he had promised them great blessings if they only remained faithful to him. But they forsook God who loved and cared for them, and turned to worship sticks and stones, senseless things which they had made with their own hands. The folly of it! Folly was it for the heathen nations around who knew not the Lord, but shame as well as folly was it for God's chosen people. "For my people have committed two evils," is the word of the Lord through Jeremiah: "they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." This was the senseless sin of Manasseh.

Rejected Privileges Aggravate Judgment. It is really, literally true that the refusal of great privilege works corresponding ruin, and that those who are better than the heathen in opportunity become worse than the heathen if that opportunity is ignored or rejected. This was true in the days of Manasseh, as our text teaches; the people of Judah out-Heroded Herod in superstition and excess of wickedness. How solemnly does our Lord teach the same awful truth in his pathetic denunciation of the cities of Galilee! Their rejected privileges had enormously aggravated their sin and judgment. And it is true today that to reject Christ is to intensify our sin, to multiply our misery, to blacken our despair beyond anything known to the Pagan world. We become worse, we do worse, we suffer worse, than the heathen.

It is notorious that the crimes of Europe are darker than the crimes of Africa. Some time ago a book was written to show that the morality of London was in many respects worse than the morality of Calcutta, and we may easily believe that the contention of that author was correct. The crimes of the heathen, dark enough, horrible enough, are less intensely wicked than are many of the crimes committed in our midst. We often warmly congratulate ourselves that infanticide, cannibalism, head-hunting, and so forth, are so far away from us, but we are startled from time to time to find the bloodiest tragedies perpetrated at our doors. And the same is true of the more ordinary vices of our civilization—they are specially intense. Conflict, as we know, brings out the powers of those who contend. A physical contest brings out your muscles, an intellectual conflict brings out your brain, and a moral antagonism brings out your faculty for good or evil, as the case may be. If we contend against evil, it brings the good in us to fulness

and perfection, and the longer and the bitterer our fight against evil in any form, the deeper and stronger our virtue becomes, and so in ages of special darkness we have most glorious saints. But, on the other side, if we fight against light and truth and righteousness, we develop a strength of wickedness quite peculiar.

Friends, men shall come from the east and west and the north and south, and sit down in the kingdom of God; let us, greatly privileged, beware. Some little time ago I was looking at those oak trees which grow close on the Cornish coast—they are scrubby, gnarled, miserable things, but they do their best. They are dreadfully tempest-beaten, the wind unceasingly pours upon them, yet they grow as high as they can, they take advantage of every bit of shelter, they bend and run quite across the road, sending up a daring little shoot here and there. They are dwarfed, misshapen things at the best, no poet or forester will care for them, but they looked to me quite pathetic and grand; their whole existence has been a tremendous struggle against a bitter fate, every leaf upon them was a fluttering flag of victory. So, many of the heathen have had fewest privileges, but they have been faithful, and God has now planted them in a milder clime and by the rivers of water. Surely we ought to be fat and flourishing. What shall be said if the tempest-beaten, lightning-riven trees of the sea-coast and mountain-tops are glorious, and we who have been planted in the King's garden are mean and barren? The lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage; let us watch lest our wasted opportunity bring upon us the greater ruin.—Condensed from "Noon Day Addresses," by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

II MAKING OTHERS SIN

A Sad Truth. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign. It seems that he began to do evil at that early age, and kept on doing evil for many, many years. It was only after a life of evil doing that he repented. He was pardoned then, but he could not undo the evil he had wrought. He could not undo the effects of sin upon his own self. But Manasseh had not marked his soul alone. Sin never does stop with the sinner. He had led Judah away from loyalty to God. Do you think that one can live a life of sin and it will not matter if only he repents and is forgiven at the last? It will matter, both to himself and to others. Repentance cannot undo the evil that has been wrought; it cannot do the good that has not been wrought; it cannot bring back the wasted days that they may be lived over and filled with righteous deeds. "The very curse of an evil deed," says Schiller, "is that it must always continue to engender evil."

Sin an Infectious Disease. If a person could sin by himself he alone would suffer, but sin in any form is an invasion upon territory and privileges to which we have no claim whatever. The man who swears pollutes the ears of some other man. The man who steals takes that which is the property of another. Every wrong, no matter of what nature, is an injury to some one else. A drunkard wastes money which belongs to his wife and children. When a boy lies some other boy is involved. Sin is like a weed which outgrows the field where it first found root and ruins other fields not on the same property. It is like a foul disease which communicates to bodies outside itself. Sin is infectious, contagious, malarious. It cannot be restricted to the person committing it.—J. Wesley Johnston.

Sin's Polluting Nature. When some one in a family has scarlet fever, the Board of Health puts a staring red sign on the house and everybody who can possibly do so leaves the sick person to the care of a doctor or nurse, and keeps away from the house till the danger is over.

But men and women who are tainted with the contagion of sin move about among our dearest and best. It is true, the law says to the desperate criminal, to the burglar or the murderer or the assassin, "You cannot be allowed to endanger society." But there are thousands of forms of sin that are not classed as crimes, and the human laws never can punish or remove the sinner from society.

You cannot put a man in jail simply for being intensely selfish. And yet his selfishness may ruin the character of many young people. You cannot arrest and convict a man for drinking intoxicating liquors so long as he keeps sober, and yet his example may lead scores of other men into crime and

ruin. You cannot bring a man into court and charge him with being dangerous to the human family because he does not believe in the Bible or prayer or God. And yet his sin of unbelief may imperil the soul of your child or mine. You cannot shut a man up in an insane asylum because he is in the habit of laughing at religious things or telling indecent stories to young boys, or finding perpetual fault with Christian people. And yet such a man may be as dangerous to the spiritual life of a neighborhood as a maniac would be to its physical life. All crime is sin. But all sin is not crime in the eyes of society.

What an awfully selfish thing sin is! Not content to work out the destruction of the man who is possessed by it, sin always reaches out for those nearest and pollutes and disfigures and hurries into the way of destruction all others who come in contact with it. If we labeled all sinners with regular signs, as we label houses where there are contagious diseases, how many of us would be going about saying to society, as the lepers were obliged to cry, "Unclean! unclean! Come not nigh! I will certainly pollute thee! Unclean! Unclean!"—Condensed from a Sermon by Charles M. Sheldon.

The Difficulty of Repairing the Breach. The disastrous floods in the Fen district, covering over fifty square miles of land, have evicted some hundreds of people from their homes. The situation is a strange one. The River Ouse flows on a level higher than that of the adjoining country, and the swollen stream forced a huge breach in the bank, through which the torrent poured. The first necessity was to stop the gap, obviously a task of great difficulty; then to pump the overflow back into the river. Thus will the energies and ingenuities of engineering skill be taxed in no small degree before the land is once more reclaimed. Have we not here an old truth in a new dress, in regard to spiritual life and character? In one short hour sin may cause a breach which cannot be repaired in years; and often the discovery and stoppage of the immediate cause is but the first step to a long and laborious course of reparation which even then cannot make the wrong as if it had never been done. In one of his despondent utterances over the backsliding of Jerusalem, Jeremiah cries: "Thy breach is like a great sea; who can heal thee?" (Lam. 2:13). There is only one answer. "The Lord bindeth up the breach of his people" (Is. 30:26).—"The Christian."

Lasting Influence. Every action of every man has an ancestry and a posterity in other lives. The stains of life have power to spread. The stains of other lives have crossed over into our lives, stains from our lives into theirs. A hundred years hence we all must live again—in thoughts, in tendencies, in influences, perhaps in sins and stains in other lives. "Take my influence," cried a sinful man, "and bury it with me." He was going to be with Christ, his influence had been against Christ; he was leaving it behind. As a conspirator called by some act of grace to his sovereign's table remembers with unspeakable remorse the assassin whom he left in ambush at the king's palace gate, so he recalls the traitorous years and the influence which will plot against his Lord when he is in eternity. Oh, it were worth living a holy and self-denying life, were it only to join the choir invisible of those mighty dead who live again in lives made better by our presence.—Condensed from "The Ideal Life," by Henry Drummond.

III TURNING FROM SIN TO GOD

A Glad Truth. Old and sin-hardened as Manasseh was, when he turned to God in humble penitence, God heard his supplication. In his last years he cast out of the Temple and the city the heathen idols he had brought there, built up the altar of the Lord and offered sacrifices thereon, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord. He turned from the worship of idols to the worship of the true God. It is a wonderful truth that there is no one who cannot right-about-face and ceasing from doing evil learn to do well.

Professor L. H. Bailey, of Cornell, has told in "The Independent" how he transformed a wild strawberry plant. "I gave the wild plants a warm and pleasant knoll in the backyard," he says, "and they grew and thrived. At the end of two years I found that the distinguishing ancestral marks had disappeared and I had a new type of plant. At first it was a squat, blue-leaved, short-trussed, densely-hairy, bashful plant, just brought from the wilds of Oregon; then, the next year, a little more erect, the leaves thinner and more delicate, and a more confident and aspiring attitude; and the third year, a tall-growing,

green-leaved, high-trussed, thinly-hairy plant, with ambitions to rival the garden strawberry. I began with *Fragaria Chiloensis*, but ended with *Fragaria Grandiflora*, and I had the very same plants—the identical roots—to end with that I had to begin with." So the sinner can yield himself to the hand of God and become the saint by a like gradual process, as he ceases to do evil and learns to do well.

We Must Be New Creations. By unaided effort we may fuse together certain virtues and build up our character into passable beauty and worth; but we shall never be able to reach the highest type, to create for ourselves by any ingenuity a pure heart, and to transform our character into the loveliness and preciousness of true holiness. This is God's work. We must be born from above.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

True Repentance. Repentance is not conviction; you can be convicted without repentance. It is one thing to be called at five o'clock in the morning, and another thing to get up. It is one thing to be awake, and another thing to arise. It is one thing to see your duty, and another thing to face it and do it like a man. It is one thing to have light, and another thing to have life. God took the trouble to awaken you, to convince you, and had you submitted, had you paid attention, you would have been a Christian. But you killed, you stifled, you resisted, you fought against it; you said "No"; you rolled over and went to sleep again.

Listen! In Bible language repentance is turning from sin to God, from sin to God. That is repentance—"from," "to." It is putting your hand on your heart and getting hold of the thing that has been your curse, and dragging it out, and saying: "There, Lord Jesus, that is it, and I will die before I will commit it again. I will turn from it now and forever." That is repentance.—Gipsy Smith.

Finding the Way to God. The Rev. Fred J. Paton, son of the famous missionary of that name, was the first one to labor among the dangerous cannibals of Maleluka. When he first went there he was walking through the forest when he suddenly felt the cold muzzle of a rifle against his cheek. The cannibals had surprised him.

"I spoke quietly to the owners of the rifles," he tells us. "As they saw that I was unarmed, they recognized that I was on an errand of peace. If I had been armed I would have been shot. 'I have come to tell you about God,' I said. 'We know about God,' they replied. Then I told them how they had missed their way to God and how Jesus had come down from heaven to show them the way back. Their interest deepened as they heard of the atonement. 'That is a true word,' said the chief. 'That is good.' They believed that no wrong could be atoned for without the shedding of blood, either of man or of animal. One man explained that he was just going to kill a few men, but (with utmost composure) his business could wait, as he could kill men at any time, but could not often hear about Jesus.

"Everywhere I found natives longing to hear more about Christ. When I left that mountain the old chief presented me with his sacred spoon, the spoon with which he and his ancestors had eaten human flesh, a spoon blackened with human blood and reeking with tragedy. 'Your story,' he said, 'is reasonable to me. It is true we have lost our way to God and need God's Son to show us the way back.'

"A teacher was dispatched to the district, and by his efforts the whole village became Christian."

"Search me, O God!" There may be some sins which we do not know about, and yet we are conscious that our lives are not right with God. A friend of mine started to row one day, and he took hold of the oars and tried to move the boat. It would not go. He pulled harder and harder, and still the boat would not move. He jerked out one oar and tried to push the boat off. Still it would not leave the wharf. Finally he looked down and saw a rope holding the boat beneath the water. So it is here and there with people—some secret strand, it may be of pride, of indifference, of selfishness, is binding us to the shore. May we not with sincerity and earnestness offer this prayer "Search me, O God"—there will then be searching indeed—"and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me—and then lead me in the way everlasting."—J. R. Mott, in "Students and the Modern Missionary Crusade."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 9. The penalty of rejecting the fuller light is that you sink lower than do those who never had that light.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Verse 10. The young who are beginning this business of life need to be willing to learn, to listen humbly to warning and advice.—Hugh Black.

Verse 12. Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:

Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

—Psalms.

Verse 13. Let no man despair of God's mercies to forgive him unless he be sure that his sins be greater than God's mercies.—Jeremy Taylor.

Verse 15. The backslider's terrible lot is to make up inch by inch the leeway he has lost.—Henry Drummond.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Manasseh would not heed divine warnings. Is it not the very sin of sins, and the climax of suicidal folly, that God should call and men stop their ears? And yet how many of us pay no more regard to his voice in his providences, in our own consciences, in history, in Scripture, and in Christ, than to idle wind whistling through an archway!—Alexander Maclaren.

The Prodigal Son returned from the far country to his father's house and said, "Father, I have sinned," and received his father's forgiveness, but how much better it would have been for him had he never left that father's house! There is something better than repentance—to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man; there is something better than forgiveness of sin—not to need forgiveness. Sinless we shall never be, but we need never stray into the far country.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. A ruler's influence upon the moral conditions of his realm. England under the Georges and William IV compared with England under Queen Victoria.

2. Are battles now fought under God's leadership? See Mazzini's essay, "Faith and the Future"; "God's Plan in This War," "Literary Digest," April 17, 1915.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who followed Manasseh as king of Judah, and what can you tell about his reign? (2 Ch. 33.21-25.) 2. Read the account of Josiah's reign in 2 K. 22.1-7; 23.4-20. 3. What was the condition in Assyria at this time? (*Guide*, p. 298.) 4. How old was Josiah when he "began to seek after God"? 5. What did Paul say that Timothy had known from a child? (2 Tim. 3.15.) 6. What does Prov. 20.11 say about a child's religion? 7. How old was Josiah when he began the reforms in his realm? 8. What prophet encouraged Josiah in the thirteenth year of his reign? (Jer. 1.1, 2.) 9. Where were the bones of the priests obtained, v. 5? 10. Why did he burn them? (*Guide*, p. 297.) 11. What did the Levites who were skilled musicians accomplish? (*Guide*, p. 297.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Who was the last good king of Judah, and what was the relationship between him and Josiah? 2. How can you explain the fact that Josiah was so different from his father and his grandfather? 3. What does the second verse mean? 4. Why is David called Josiah's "father"? 5. Why did Josiah so utterly destroy the images? 6. What great leader of the Israelites turned images into dust? (Ex. 32.20.) 7. Why did not Josiah limit his reforms to his own kingdom? 8. Who had built the Temple? 9. How long before Josiah's time? 10. What reasons can you give why every one should begin to serve God at an early age? 11. What reasons can you give for loyalty to the house of God today?

Note-Book Work. In your book of "The Last Kings of Judah" write: "An Account of Manasseh's reign."

What does our church need and what may we as a class do for it? Write your answer, and bring it to class next week.

JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN

Children Text

Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth.
Ecclesiastes 12:1

LESSON II Chronicles 34:1-13 MEMORIZE verses 2, 3

1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and walked in the ways of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. 3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim, and the graven images, and the molten images. 4 And they brake down the altars of the Baalim in his presence; and the sun-images that were on high above them he hewed down; and the Asherim, and the graven images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the grave of them that had sacrificed unto them. 5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and purged Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And so *did he* in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their ruins round about. 7 And he brake down the altars, and beat the Asherim and the graven images into powder, and hewed down all the sun-images throughout all the land of Israel, and returned to Jerusalem.

8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of Jehovah, his God. 9 And they came to Hilkiah the high priest and delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the keepers of the threshold, had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin, and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 And they delivered it into the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of Jehovah; and the workmen that wrought in the house of Jehovah gave it to mend and repair the house: 11 even to the carpenters and to the builders they gave it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to make beams for the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 12 And the men did the work faithfully; and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and *others* of the Levites, all that were skilful with instruments of music. 13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and set forward all that did the work in every manner of service: and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers and porters.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Accession and Character of Josiah, 1, 2.
- II. Judah and Israel Cleansed from Heathen Practices, 3-7.
- III. The Temple Repaired, 8-13.

1-13. Read 2 K. 22:1-7; 23:4-20.

1. *Josiah*. Son of Amon, grandson of Manasseh.—*Was eight years old*. "At the age of eight he was chiefly under the care of the women of the household; and through them, or some of his ministers, or some of the priests, his character, on which so much depended, was molded by the principles of his great-grandfather, Hezekiah" (George Adam Smith).

2. *He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah*. "He left the brightest name for piety and religious zeal among all the successors of David" (Smith).—*David his father*. His ancestor.—*Turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left*. See Dt. 5:32.

3. *While he was yet young.* He was now sixteen: before this, others had doubtless governed in his name.—*His father.* His ancestor.—*In the twelfth year.* When he was twenty years old. In the thirteenth year the prophet Jeremiah came to his aid, Jer. 1.2—*High places.* See p. 256.—*The Asherim.* Plural of Asherah. The graven images of the goddess Asherah. "Like the idols described in Is. 41.7; 44.12, they evidently consisted of a core of wood overlaid with precious metal, since they could be burned and 'stamped to powder,' and were periodically decorated with woven hangings by the women votaries of Asherah, 2 K. 23.8."—*To purge.* To make ceremonially clean.

4. *The Baalim.* Plural of Baal.—*In his presence.* Under his personal supervision.—*The sun-images.* Manasseh instituted the worship of the host of heaven: see 2 K. 23.11—*Break in pieces.* See 2 K. 23.4-14.—*Made dust of them.* As Moses did with the golden calves, Ex. 32.20.—*Strewed it upon the graves.* "As if he said, there you lie together, pounded idols and dead worshippers, neither able to help the other" (Maclaren).

5. *Burnt the bones of the priests upon the altars.* The bones were taken from near-by burial places: see 2 K. 23.13-20 and below.

6. *In the cities of Manasseh . . . even unto Naphtali.* The Assyrian power now was waning, and Judah evidently had some sort of control over the cities of the former Northern Kingdom, where there were some Israelites as well as the foreign people whom the kings of Assyria had brought there.—*In their ruins round about.* The cities had been destroyed by the Assyrians. Or, as otherwise read, *with their axes:* the Hebrew is obscure, RVm.

8. *Now in the eighteenth year of his reign.* Read 2 K. 22.3-20.—*Shaphan.* A scribe, 2 K. 22.3. "The secretary of state."—*The recorder.* Or, chronicler, RVm. "The official historian."—*The house of Jehovah.* "The heathen cults may have ceased for the rest of Josiah's reign, but upon his death they immediately revived. But the centralization of the national worship of Jehovah, the establishment of the one sanctuary for the One God, was settled once for all. Whether cleansed or not from heathen cults, Jerusalem became, not merely the principal school and shrine of the one great system of ethical and intellectual monotheism in the ancient world, but its material sign and sacrament, its only altar, and for centuries almost an equal object with its God, of confidence and longing" (George Adam Smith).

9. *Delivered the money.* It had evidently been collected during a somewhat long period.—*The keepers of the threshold.* The Levitical door keepers.—*And of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* Another reading is, *and they returned to Jerusalem,* RVm.

10. *The workmen.* Evidently these were contractors or overseers, for they are distinguished from the carpenters and builders, verse 11.

11. *Couplings.* Beams.—*The houses.* The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, 1 Ch. 28.11.—*The kings of Judah had destroyed.* By their neglect to keep it in repair, and also by their giving the Temple over to the worship of the Baalim, 2 Ch. 33.4-7.

12. *Sons of Merari.* Merari was the son of Levi, to whom a division of the Levites trace their descent.—*The Kohathites.* Descendants of Kohath, another son of Levi.—*To set it forward.* Or, *to preside over it,* RVm. These overseers saw to the progress of the work.—*All that were skilled with instruments of music.* See below.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *He burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars.* Two reasons led him to do this. The people would deem the idolatrous altars defiled and would turn with horror from worshipping there again, and the act would be considered as a warning to the living priests of Baal, for it was believed that spirits after death were affected by the treatment given the bodies.

12. *All that were skilful with instruments of music.* It is fabled of Orpheus, a most celebrated musician, that such was the enchanting harmony of his lyre, that he built the city of Thebes by it: the stones and timbers danced to his melody, and by the power of his harmony rose up, and took their respective places in the different parts of the wall that was to defend the city. This is fable; but as all fable is a representation of truth, where is the truth and fact to which this refers? Among the books that have been discovered in the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii is a Greek Treatise on Music

by Philodemus; and here we have the truth represented which lay hidden under the fables of Orpheus and Amphion. This latter was a skilful harper, who was frequently employed by the Theban workmen to play to them while engaged in their labor, and for which they rewarded him out of the proceeds of that labor. So powerful and pleasing was his music that they went lightly and comfortably through their work; and time and labor passed on without fatigue; and the walls and towers were speedily raised. This, by a metaphor, was attributed to the dulcet sounds of his harp; and poetry seized on and embellished it, and mythology incorporated it with her fabulous system. May we not suppose, then, that skilful musicians among the Levites did exercise their art among the workmen who were employed in the repairs of the house of the Lord?—Adam Clarke, in "Second Chronicles."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What good king in our lessons was the son of a wicked king? What wicked king was the son of a good king? What were the "high places"? What were the Baalim?

Josiah and His Teachers. Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon, who followed the evil practices of his father before his reformation. After two years Amon was slain by his court officials, who in turn were put to death by the people, and his son Josiah was placed on the throne.

"In Josiah's youthful training is probably to be found the explanation of his remarkable character and work," writes Professor Kent. "The probabilities strongly support the conclusion that his youthful teacher was the prophet Zephaniah, whose sermons roused the nation, as well as the young king. The stern, uncompromising spirit which characterizes the prophet's reform sermons, is reflected in the extreme measures adopted later by Josiah. Jeremiah must have been born during the closing years of Manasseh's reign, and was therefore a contemporary of king Josiah and of the royal prophet Zephaniah. In the light of the narrative of Kings it is evident that Zephaniah and Jeremiah did not stand alone in their efforts for reform. Hilkiah, the priest, was in full sympathy with the new movement. And Josiah had gathered about him a group of able officers who supported him in his reform measures."

Josiah reigned 639-608 B.C. It is interesting to note in this connection that the present Emperor of Japan belongs to a dynasty that has endured since Jimmu Tenno's reign, who was contemporaneous with King Josiah.

"The accession of the young king Josiah marks an important transition in the history of Judah. The beginning of his reign witnessed the passing of the authority of Assyria, and its close the appearance of the new world power, the Chaldeans, on the horizon of Southwestern Asia. His reign was during the calm between two great wars of foreign invasion."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Judah, Jerusalem, and the Temple, and cities in the former Northern Kingdom are mentioned. Though *Simeon* was south of Judah, it is mentioned with the tribal lands on the north. See map, p. 264, where the locations of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, Naphtali are also shown.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Tender twigs are bent with ease,
Aged trees do break with bending."

The conscience of a child is tender, the will of a child has not become accustomed to make wrong choices; in this lesson you have the opportunity of teaching your pupils that it is their duty and their privilege to serve God during their whole lives, and the opportunity of leading their wills to make the choice that Josiah made.

Teachers of boys should ponder these words of J. Lewis Paton: "Here we are at the age of twelve, when the tide in the affairs of the boy is at the flood, and if we omit to take it then all the remainder of his voyage will be in shallows and in misery. Everything depends upon our understanding what those currents are. The time to make tea is the moment the kettle has come to the boil, and the same metaphor, 'coming to the boil,' is not a bad one to describe the changing period in the boy's life as the 'teen age' approaches."

His age of stability is over, the period when he is in perfect harmony with his circumstances, and he is plunged into the ferment of adolescence. In his body all is ferment; there is a tremendous growth of muscle and in the nerve centers, and sometimes the growth is not quite harmonious. The outside case grows more quickly than the inside, or vice versa, and we find the boy's temper not quite so angelic as when he was a boy of eleven. And his mind, in the same way, is in a ferment. New energies are developing, he has a new outlook, all sorts of new windows are being opened into his mind that he had not before; he has new hopes, new ambitions, new feelings, new impulses, and a new sense of independence and of responsibility, a new consciousness of himself, and at the same time a new sense of relationship with others at the same age; new sympathies, a new antithesis, new rivalries and new friendships. It is no exaggeration to say that this age represents the birth of personality. If there is any truth in this, it is an age most important and most critical. It is eminently a plastic age. A mark set upon it now is a mark which will determine the life. At no time is right molding so fruitful of after-results; at no time is a mistake so fatal; at no time is a wrong environment, an evil stimulus, or a false ideal so desperately dangerous as it is now."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. There are so many kings of Judah who partly did what was right in the eyes of God, and partly what was wrong, who tried to worship both God and Baal, or who began to worship God and then turned to idolatry, that it is a pleasure to hear about a king who wholly followed the Lord, who throughout his life swerved not from the straight path. This king was Josiah. Who was his father? His grandfather? What sort of kings were they?

For Older Pupils. The Hon. Daines Barrington has given an interesting account of his experiments with birds in his work on "Philosophical Transactions." "I have educated nesting linnets under the three best singing larks, the skylark, woodlark, and titlark, every one of which, instead of the linnet's song, adhered entirely to that of their respective instructor. When the note of the titlark linnet was thoroughly fixed, I hung the bird, for a quarter of a year, in a room with two common linnets which were in full song; the titlark linnet, however, did not borrow any note from the linnet's song, but adhered steadfastly to that of the titlark."

Birds and folks are alike, then, in this, that if they are taught early enough, whatever their native tendencies, they may learn the right notes to which they will adhere through life. Naturally one would expect Josiah to be an idolater like his father Amon and grandfather Manasseh, but while he was yet young he learned to know the true God, and he was never afterwards led astray.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I RELIGION IN YOUTH

When the Trend of a Life Begins. What a contrast between the records of the two boy kings of Judah, Manasseh and Josiah! Manasseh, the son of the good king Hezekiah, ascended the throne at the age of twelve and reigned long and badly. He was the worst of idolaters, following after every false god and scorning all the warnings of the prophets. Josiah, the son of the wicked king Amon and grandson of wicked Manasseh, became king at the age of eight, and despite the evil influences that surrounded him, was a true follower of the Lord and battled manfully for his cause.

The trend of each life began in boyhood. Go through the woods and note the crooked and dwarfed trees there. They did not grow up straight and tall for a season and then change to their present condition; something gave the crook to the tree or stopped its sturdiness early in life. The spiritual life of human beings is much like the natural life of trees: it is in boyhood and girlhood that the trend is given to character which makes it strong and upright.

Dr. W. L. Watkinson had a friend who was famous as an exhibitor of prize flowers, but when he paid him a visit a few weeks before a great exhibition was to take place the friend was paying very little attention to his plants. When Dr. Watkinson expressed his surprise, his friend replied that he had given his

undivided attention to the flowers ten months earlier, and he was almost sure of seeing his name at the head of the prize-list. "If you were adults," the great preacher said to the children he was addressing, "I should point the moral, but you are intellectually alert enough to see that if you are careful in your life now, by and by you will bear the beautiful flower and the ripe fruit of a noble life, which at the end of the days the King will gather into his celestial garden."

Children are not too Young to Know Their Creator. Suppose some one said to you about your father: "You are too young to think anything about him; you must wait till you grow up before you understand who he is, what he thinks of you, what he does for you"; what would you say to that? You would say: "Nonsense! I may be only a little child, but I know my father, and I love him, and I understand him when he talks to me." Of course you do; you understand him, you know who he is; and just so you can understand that greater Father, whose child you are—your Father who is in heaven.—Charles Cuthbert Hall, in "The Silver Cup."

Remember Thy Creator in the Days of Thy Youth. I have just returned from a holiday to find the sweet peas in my garden in full bloom. But they creep along the ground in twisted shapes and are robbed of their full stature, because they were not staked at the beginning. Souls are like flowers, they need to be staked at the beginning, to have the commandments of Christ to clamber upon at the outset.

The word "character" is a buried parable. It means the impress of a die, and to take the impress the metal must be soft. God fuses the hardest metal of human character, which the years have hardened into habit, fuses it in the furnace of sorrow and pain and penitence, that it may, even at the last, bear the image of Christ; but never is the metal of our heart more tender to take that impression, and to take it without pain, than when we are boys and girls.—From a Sermon by W. Stuart Robertson.

A Lesson from a Piece of Slate. You have seen a piece of slate upon which was the impress of beautiful ferns. How was that marking produced? Centuries ago, when the clay was young and impressionable, the beautiful fern fell upon it, and was covered and pressed before it decayed. It is beautiful now, but time was needed to make it so. It would be impossible for us to imitate on a rock these markings, or even to make any impression with a fern on a rock. So a young life, bearing upon it the impress of Jesus Christ, will become beautiful in a way which cannot be duplicated when older. The tender conscience of youth becomes in old age hardened and immovable. The truths learned in youth last longer, too. We cannot easily eradicate the habits of youth. The slate and its story show the value of giving one's self to the Master's service early in life. Why not now?—Adapted from an Article by Helen Gill Lovett.

Give Your Youth to God. A Christian woman was employed as a nurse in a house where a loved mother lay ill. Her daughter, a girl of fifteen, had never given her heart to Christ, fearing that by so doing she might lose some of her youthful pleasures, and saying that when she grew older, then she would give herself to him.

One day she came into the house, bringing a bouquet of beautiful fresh carnations for her mother. The nurse commented upon their loveliness and then said, "We will not take them up to your mother now—they are too fresh and beautiful; we will wait a few days until they have begun to fade and wither." The young girl was surprised, almost indignant, and sought an explanation for such a seemingly unnatural course. Said the nurse: "Is not this what you are doing to your heavenly Father? Are you not by your conduct reserving for yourself the beauty and freshness of your young life, and waiting to offer him the faded blossoms from which all the beauty and freshness have departed?"—Grace A. Stevenson, in "The Christian Endeavor World."

II CIVIC RIGHTEOUSNESS

What Must Precede our Civic Reforms. Josiah "began to seek after God." The other day I saw a young art student copying one of Turner's pictures in the National Gallery. His eyes were being continually lifted from his canvas to his "master." He put nothing down which he had not first seen. He was "seeking after" Turner!

And thus it was with Josiah. His eyes were "ever toward the Lord"! He

studied the "ways" of the Lord, in order that he might incarnate them in national life and practice. Wise doings always begin in clear seeing. We should be far more efficient in practice if we were more diligently assiduous in vision. It is never a waste of time to "look unto him." Looking is a most needful part of our daily discipline. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

And because Josiah saw the holiness of the Lord he saw the uncleanness of the people. He had a vision of God's holy place, and he therefore saw the defilement of the material worship. "In the twelfth year he began to purge Judah." Yes, that is the sequence. The reformer follows the seer. We shall begin to sweep the streets of our city when we have gazed upon the glories of the holy city, the New Jerusalem.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "My Daily Meditation."

Battles for Righteousness are Worth While. An instantaneous photograph taken at the moment the Yale boat crossed the finish line in the premier "varsity" race with Harvard made an impressive picture, which one could not view without mixed sensations of pain and admiration. The camera showed that no sooner was the struggle ended than (perhaps before they knew whether victory or defeat was theirs) two of the Yale contestants bent limply over their oars exhausted, while the oarsman who pulled the stroke fell back in complete collapse upon the bottom of the boat, where a comrade restored him to consciousness by dashing water in his face. The struggle had been terrific, and at its climax the winning crew had almost succumbed to the frightful strain.

This tremendous expenditure of nerve and energy was made to secure a superiority over competitors which measured one-fifth of a second in time and a few inches in space. No Yale man doubted that the prize of victory was worth all it cost, even if some members of the winning crew sustained permanent damage from the abnormal exertion. The enthusiasm and pride of youth in obtaining laurels for a beloved college, or even the spirit of emulation which animates earnest mortals the moment they are matched against other persons, was sufficient to drive these oarsmen to the highest pitch of their power and skill.

There are rewards and incentives greater than the Yale eight fought for in propelling their racing shells four miles up-stream at New London the other day. They are found in the civic, social, moral and religious conflicts of our time. Youthful daring, prowess and consecration can find no contest in athletics more calculated to stir their blood than these battles for righteousness. And if, now and then, the desperate struggle with iniquity exacts an exhaustion of vitality which leaves a contestant half dead, who shall say the price is too high?—"The Christian Advocate."

A Good Way in which to Make the World Better.

Do you wish the world were better?
Let me tell you what to do:
Set a watch upon your actions,
Keep them always straight and true;
Rid your mind of selfish motives,
Let your thoughts be clear and high,
You can make a little Eden
Of the sphere you occupy. —Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

III KEEPING THE HOUSE OF GOD IN REPAIR

Temple and Church Should be Worthy of God. Josiah's zeal in destroying the idols and heathen altars was next expended in repairing the Temple. It is interesting to keep in mind that the king was only sixteen years old when he began to show his zeal for the worship of the true God, and only twenty-six years of age when he turned his attention to the repair of God's house. The repairs that were called for show how completely the Temple had been neglected and abused. Probably there was not a bit of the gold that was not black with smoke, the cedar beams had rotted away, the stones had fallen, everything was covered with dust and dirt. Under Josiah's leadership the Temple was restored to its fitting order and beauty.

The building in which we worship is not the one rallying-place of all true followers of the Lord; it has not the sacred associations of the olden Temple, nor has it wonderful patriotic and historical interests, but it is the place where

we meet to worship the same God who is from everlasting to everlasting. It should be a worthy meeting-house. Those who dwell in palaces of cedar should, like David, be unwilling to worship in a tent of cloth. There should not be such disparity between what we lavish on ourselves and what we give to God. But whether the house of God where we worship is temple or tent, we should love it as the place where we find God always.

They Could not Afford to Give Anything to God's House. A man who attempted to raise some money on a subscription paper for a necessary church out West relates his experience thus:

The first man I met said he was very sorry, but the fact was, he was so involved in his business that he couldn't give anything. Very sorry, but a man in debt as he was owed his first duty to his creditors. He was smoking an expensive cigar, and before I left his store he bought of a pedler who came in a pair of expensive Rocky Mountain cuff-buttons.

The next man I went to was a young clerk in a banking establishment. He read the paper over, acknowledged that the church was needed, but said he was owing for his board, was badly in debt, and did not see how he could give anything. That afternoon, as I went by the base-ball ground, I saw this young man pay fifty cents at the entrance to go in, and saw him mount the grand stand where special seats were sold for a quarter of a dollar.

The third man to whom I presented the paper was a farmer living near the town. He also was sorry, but times were hard, his crops had been a partial failure, the mortgage on his farm was a heavy load, the interest was coming due, and he really could not see his way clear to give to the church, although it was just what the new town needed. A week from that time I saw that same farmer drive into town with his entire family, and go to the circus, afternoon and night, at an expense of at least four dollars.

The Bible says, "Judge not that ye be not judged," but it says also, "By their fruit ye shall know them." And I really could not help thinking that the devil could use that old sentence "in debt" to splendid advantage especially when he had a selfish man to help him.—"The Youth's Companion."

Churches Should be Beautiful. Well, what matters, say you, that the churches be ugly if the truth is preached therein? Is it not fair, however, to say that Beauty is the truth, too, of its kind, and why should it not be cultivated as well as the other truth? Why build those hideous barbaric temples, when at the expense of a little study and taste beautiful structures might be raised?—Thackeray, in "Irish Sketch Book."

The World is God's Dwelling Place. What those people in that old time tried to do in their way, you and I and all of us should try to do in ours. We are not merely to build houses of worship for God. We are to build factories, and warehouses, and produce exchanges, and railways, and shops, and banks, for God. Or rather, we are to see and feel that these and the activities they represent, our industrial works and employments in connection with them, our social and professional engagements, our buying and selling of goods, our practicing of medicine, our arguing of cases in court, our going out to parties and evening receptions, our meeting together in club-houses—to see and to feel that the whole of our complex and growing civilization, our diversified social life with all its varied equipment, is not our temple merely—to contribute to our comfort and to minister to our pride—but something very much more. We should recognize the fact that our manifold civilization is chiefly the temple of God—that the purpose of God is in it, pervades it. Certainly we cannot be wrong in thinking that it is God's purpose to make this world his dwelling-place, and that it is his joy and should also be our task to help to make it such. That, it seems to me, is what you and I are here for.—David H. Greer, in "From Things to God."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 2. However heredity may prevail in the realms of physics and mentality, it is evident that it does not determine moral and religious character.—W. L. Watkinson.

Verse 3. To take the great gift of youth thoughtlessly and selfishly, merely as a gift, with no thought of it as an opportunity, is really to throw away the boon and despise it as worthless.—Hugh Black.

Verse 3. I cannot remember the time when I had not intense yearnings after God.—Evangeline Booth.

Verse 4. "Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame;
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name."

Verse 7. Most of the difficulties of trying to live the Christian life arise from attempting to half live it.—Henry Drummond.

Verse 8. It is a sanctified imagination that invests the church building, whether it be a brick meeting-house or a noble cathedral, with true sublimity; and love to God, whose house it is, can make the humblest material structure a home of the spirit.—James Stalker.

Verse 8. St. Paul's Cathedral is nothing but a glorified quarry if Christ be out of it, and my old gipsy tent is a Cathedral when Christ is in it.—Gipsy Smith.

Verse 10. "It is dishonoring to God to let his house fall into decay, to allow it to have broken windows, stained walls, unswept floors, tawdry furniture."

Verse 12. Our lives must be full of music if we are to lay even one stone in the Temple.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

A Boy's Prayer:

God who created me
Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free,
To run, to ride, to swim;
Not when the sense is dim
But now from the heart of joy
I would remember him:
Take the thanks of a boy. —H. C. Beaching.

"Ye are God's temple," more beautiful than the Parthenon, and richer than St. Peter's, and you are to adorn, enrich, and decorate it.—Dr. N. D. Hillis.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Constructive work must follow destructive work.
2. Civic reforms. See the Second Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read 2 Ch. 34 and 2 K. 22.1-23.30. 2. What was the Book of the Law? (*Guide*, p. 304.) 3. What was a scribe's work? (*Guide*, p. 305.) 4. What was the immediate effect of the finding of the book? (*Guide*, p. 306.) 5. Read Dt. 28 and imagine the feelings of King Josiah on hearing these words. 6. What was the result of the finding of the Law? 7. What does Ps. 119.11 say about obedience to God's Book? 8. What had become of the Assyrian danger? (*Guide*, p. 305.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is meant by "the money brought unto the house of Jehovah?" (Last Lesson.) 2. Why was Josiah so terror-stricken? (*Guide*, p. 305.) 3. Why did he rend his clothes? 4. What is meant by making a covenant before Jehovah, verse 31? 5. What is meant by "stand to it," verse 32? 6. Where did Josiah begin his reform? 7. How is the Bible sometimes lost today? 8. Have you lost your Bible? 9. How much of your Bible do you not forget? 10. What part of it do you know best? 11. What part do you know little about? 12. What are some of the advantages of memorizing the Bible?

Questions upon Second Chronicles. 1. Why do we have two books of Chronicles? 2. Who wrote the books of Chronicles? 3. What was the purpose of the writer? 4. What are the books called in the various versions? 5. When was Second Chronicles written? (For answers, see pages 29-30, 32 of our Introduction.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Whittier's stanza beginning "We search the world for truth," and Dt. 10.12, 13. In your Note-Book write "VII: Josiah's Good Reign."

FINDING THE BOOK OF THE LAW

Golden Text

I will not forget thy word. Psalm 119.16

LESSON II Chronicles 34.14-33: verses 14-19, 29-33 printed

MEMORIZE verse 31

14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah *given* by Moses. 15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. 16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and moreover brought back word to the king, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they are doing. 17 And they have emptied out the money that was found in the house of Jehovah, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and into the hand of the workmen. 18 And Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read therein before the king. 19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

20 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites and all the people, both great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of Jehovah. 31 And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. 32 And he caused all that were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 33 And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were found in Israel to serve, even to serve Jehovah their God. All his days they departed not from following Jehovah, the God of their fathers.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Finding of the Book of the Law, 14-18.
- II. The Effect on Josiah of its Reading, 19-21.
- III. Huldah's Prediction regarding Judah and Josiah, 22-28.
- IV. The Covenant to Serve Jehovah, 29-33.

14. *When they brought out the money.* See the last lesson.—*Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law.* It was probably the legal portions (12-26; 28) of our Book of Deuteronomy, which calls itself "The Book of the Law" and also "The Book of the Covenant." Some scholars believe that it had long been known, but had been forgotten during the idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon, and now Hilkiah found the copy in the Temple and read it to Josiah for the first time. Others hold that it was "a new and enlarged edition of the Book of the Covenant prepared for the needs of the times, and brought forth now because Josiah was a righteous king who would enforce its decrees." Dr. George Adam Smith points out that it is precisely from this time onward that the style and phraseology which are characteristic of Deuteronomy begin to affect the literature of Israel.—*Given by Moses.* In Dt. 31.9, 26, Moses is said to have written the Law and to have delivered it to the priests. Yet there are evidences in the book that some portions of it were added by a writer subsequent to Moses. For example, Moses could not have written chapter 34, the account of his death. The phrase "beyond Jordan" for the eastern side of the river would be used only by one living in Western Palestine, and

Moses never crossed the Jordan. It speaks of boundary marks which had been set up by "those of the olden time" (19.14), indicating that when the words were written the Israelites had long been settled in the land. Deuteronomy may contain laws and customs, not of a single lifetime, but developed by many generations of God-inspired men, expressed in the form of valedictory orations of the great law-giver.

15. *Hilkiah answered.* No question is recorded, but this verb is often used when the answer is to unexpressed thoughts.—*Shaphan the scribe.* The word *scribe* means literally *man of books*; a scribe was editor and interpreter as well as copyist.

16. *Moreover brought back word.* He was going to the king with a report concerning the progress of the work, and took the book with him.

17. *Emptied out.* Or, *poured out*, RVm. From the chest into bags, 2.K. 22.9.

18. *Read therein.* Read it, the entire roll, according to 2 K. 22.10.

19. *He rent his clothes.* In token of his grief and fear on learning what the law required and what was the punishment for the disobedience of which he and the nation has been guilty, v. 21. "To realize the effect of the reading of the book upon the susceptible soul of Josiah we must read it ourselves, that is, read over Dt. 22-26, and imagine what a pious king in old Jerusalem must have felt on hearing for the first time a Divine revelation of such tremendous import. The book contained implicit directions as to worship and conduct, and as the penalty of national disobedience decreed the loss of home and country, the sentence of the offenders was cumulative. For many generations warnings and precepts had been alike neglected, and when the day of doom should come, the sins of the fathers also would be visited upon the children. Could the doom be averted by speedy and complete obedience and penitence?" (McCurdy).

23-28. Huldah the prophetess warns them that the consequences cannot be averted, but assures them that because the king has humbled himself the punishment shall not be meted out during his reign.

29-33. Compare 2 K. 23.1-3.

30. *Both great and small.* It was a representative assembly that the king called together.—*He read.* He caused to be read by the priests, Dt. 31.7-11.—*The book of the covenant.* The same as "book of the law."

31. *Made a covenant.* Compare Hezekiah's atonement, 2 Ch. 29.20-24.—*Before Jehovah.* As if in the presence of Jehovah.—*To walk after Jehovah.* Compare Dt. 10.12, 13.

32. *To stand to it.* Signifying their willingness to obey, probably by arising.

33. *All his days.* Read the fuller account of Josiah's reformation in 2 K. 23.4-20. In the reign of his son, Jehoiakim, idolatries of various kinds were revived, but the centralization of the national worship of Jehovah at the one sanctuary, the Temple, remained.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *The book.* Our word *volume* comes from the Latin noun *volumen*, meaning a roll of writing, formed from the Latin verb *volvere*, to *roll*. Sheets of papyrus, and later of parchment, were joined together so as to form one continuous sheet, and then rolled upon a staff into a volume. The book found in the Temple was such a volume or scroll. Similar scrolls are used today in Jewish synagogues.



A Scribe and His Book

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What sort of king was Josiah? What had been the character of his father's and grandfather's reigns? Why did Paul say that the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians? (A lesson of last year.)

The End of the Assyrian Danger. Ashurbanipal had accepted Josiah as his vassal, but the death of this Assyrian king in 625 B.C. freed Judah. The danger of conquest by Assyria, which had so long threatened the Kingdom, then passed, for the Assyrian power was

waning. About 625 B.C. a great force of Scythians swept through the Assyrian Empire as far as Egypt, passing down along the Mediterranean shore, and filling with terror the hearts of the prophets, Jeremiah and Zephaniah. The Scythians retreated, however, without disturbing Judah.

The Effect of a Great Discovery. Last week we left King Josiah in the midst of his great reforms. In clearing out the neglected Temple, the Book of the Law was found. The reading of this Book to the king and then to all the people occasioned great heart-searchings, showing them that they had been doing things they ought not to have done and had failed to do things that they ought to have done. A new impulse to national righteousness was aroused. Josiah then carried out one of the greatest reforms in Israel's history, and as long as he lived Judah departed not from following Jehovah. "It is only when we realize all the tempers which inspire Deuteronomy that we can explain the rapid and unanimous adoption of the system by the nation, in spite of the fact that it involved the alteration of so many interests throughout the land," writes Dr. George Adam Smith. "The religious instincts and national conscience of the people, headed by their pious king, were stirred. Truly God himself came near to the heart of the people in such a story of grace, such repeated and urgent calls to righteousness. Then Israel's patriotism was inflamed, their intelligence aroused, and their affections drawn forth by the humane ideals presented to them. Every home, every heart, was appealed to. Every interest found itself respected. Upon the poor and the oppressed a great hope dawned. But to all this volume of movement, the edge and point was the conviction of the zealous leaders of the reform—sharpened as it had been by the cruel experiences of Manasseh's reign—that only such radical and rigorous measures as Deuteronomy enjoins could save their religion from submergence by heathenism, and their nation from destruction."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Dr. J. H. Jowett compares Sunday-school teachers to lamplighters. "I have stood upon the Calton Hill in Edinburgh," he says, "stood there in the darkening twilight, and gazed out over the vast, vague, and shadowy city. And I have seen the lamplighter going his rounds, and I have traced his progress as he kindled lamp after lamp until the lovely Princes Street stood out an unbroken line of golden light. And I have seen a lamplighter in the spiritual kingdom pass down highways of the truth and light lamp after lamp, until to many thousands the streets have been bright with wondrous illumination. This is the work of the Christian preacher and teacher—to hold up God's word as a light to guide fellow-pilgrims."

A teacher cannot hold up God's word as a guide unless he himself has found it a guide in his own life. Josiah heard and meditated and repented before he had the Word of the Law read to his people, and he stood in his place and solemnly promised to walk himself according to the words of the Book and to keep God's commandments before he called upon his people to serve God. If we cannot say to our pupils, "I know the Bible is inspired, because it inspires me," we cannot hold it up as a light to guide their feet.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. Adoniram Judson, the American missionary in Burma, had translated the Bible into the Burmese language when war was waged between Burma and England, and he was put in prison suspected of being a spy for England. Terrible were his sufferings at this time, for he was bound for nineteen months with three sets of fetters (part of the time with five), and confined in a loathsome cell. Mrs. Judson, knowing that the precious manuscript would be found and seized in her home, at first buried it, and then fearing that it would decay if left longer in the ground, she wrapped it about with cotton and made it into a pillow for her husband in his cell. Once it was stolen by the soldiers from the cell, but Mrs. Judson redeemed it by giving them a better one. Then one night Dr. Judson was hurried off to a distant prison and his pillow was thrown out into the prison yard. There one of his faithful converts found it and took it home, because it had belonged to his loved teacher.

Dr. Judson mourned for his lost Bible, but long afterwards to his great

joy he found it uninjured in the house of his convert. Is it not wonderful that this book was saved? Dr. Judson lived to see thousands reading it and keeping its laws. The earliest account of a lost and found Bible (Book of the Law) is given in both Second Chronicles and Second Kings.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I LOSING THE BOOK

Lost through Neglect. Is it true that for the majority of people the Bible, like that Book of the Law, might just as well be hidden in some dust-heap? In a Christian home a mother asked her son, a young man and a church member, where his Bible was. "I don't know, mother," he replied, "but I guess it is in my trunk upstairs." The mother then turned to her daughter and said, "And where is yours, Mary?" "Well, really, mother," the daughter said with embarrassment, "I can't tell you; I think it must be on one of my shelves." Where is *your* Bible?

Buried in the Depth of Dead Languages. The old picture of Martin Luther standing before a copy of the Scriptures carefully chained to a wall in a crypt is suggestive. The gospel then did not have free course. It was not only bound with iron, but it was sunken from the eyes of the common people in the inexplorable depth of the dead languages. The Roman Church boasts that through the Dark Ages she safely preserved the Word of God. So she did. She kept it securely locked up in an unknown tongue, and fastened by chains in her vaulted chambers. It is her boast that she kept and it is the higher boast of Protestants that they gave. Wycliff, Tyndale, Erasmus, Reuchlin, Luther, Melancthon, and the Westminster divines found the old book in the Temple, rescued it from an enormous rubbish heap of traditions and decrees, and restored it to the world through the magnificent translations which they made. Then modern history began.

The Bible is now partly lost beneath the rubbish of wild interpretations. This dangerous pursuit is not modern and is as old as man's presumption and folly. One writer—and he has many followers—has located the to-be-famed field of Armageddon in the Mississippi Valley, and has demonstrated to his own patriotic satisfaction that the combined forces of Europe are to be defeated there by an indignant and righteous American Nation. Others have elaborated abstruse systems of symbolisms and correspondences by which we are to make out what the Scriptures teach, not by what they say, but by what the recondite method of determining holds that they ought to say.

The question Christendom has to answer is whether it can afford any longer to have the chief source of its authority and teaching caricatured, which is to all intents and purposes as grave a misdemeanor as to chain it once more to the stone pillar in the vaulted crypt; for in both instances the world is robbed of it as the light of life.—George C. Lorimer, in "The Recovery of the Lost Revelation."

Buried under Magazines and Newspapers. One cannot well deny that the battle has gone against the Bible as "the only great literature" (in Huxley's phrase) within reach of the common people. Too many archers have pressed it sore. Cheapened and multiplied newspapers and magazines and books of all kinds have fallen in with, if they have not fostered, an extensive in the place of an intensive reading habit, so that the Bible must now struggle for existence as literature, instead of being the "one book." Bible reading has been bowed out of the public schools, while the home, to which it was again kindly commended, has politely passed the unwelcome guest to the Sunday-school.—"The Century Magazine."

Hidden under the Gold-Leaf of Human Inventions. The Bible has been made an idol. The Pharisees, as we know, carried about texts from the Bible sewed in the hem of their garments. Protestant Christians have held the doctrine of verbal inspiration. How our great grandfathers used to prick the pages of the Bible in the belief that the text they touched would give them guidance in the difficulties of the day! The people, because the Bible had done such great things, tried to make them seem greater! They did what people so often do, spoiled truth by ornaments. A woman, according to an old tale, had a lovely child. Desiring to make it more lovely, she covered it with gold-leaf and she killed the child. The people in the

same way, desiring to honor the Bible, hid it behind the gold-leaf of their own inventions. Modern knowledge, which has scattered these inventions, has not destroyed the Bible. Knowledge is from God; knowledge is fire and light; it burns up falsehood and reveals truth. Under the light, then, of modern knowledge, search the Scriptures. Many writers have put their learning at every one's disposal. Search the Scriptures and get courage to do God's will in God's way.—S. A. Barnett, in a Sermon.

II FINDING THE BOOK

A Buried Bible. When the missionaries of the London Missionary Society first entered Madagascar in the year 1820, they were well received by the king of that country, and before long a number of natives were converted to Christianity. But the king's successor, Queen Ranavalona I., who hated the Christians, issued in March, 1835, a decree against them, making even the possession of Christian books punishable by death. Three months later the last missionaries were obliged to leave the country, but not before they had finished printing the Bible in Malagasy and had distributed copies among the native converts. They also buried in the earth, and stored in various other hiding places, seventy complete Bibles and several cases of New Testaments, Psalters, and other parts of the Bible. These books, which passed stealthily from hand to hand and were read in secret at the peril of the native Christians' lives, became the fuel which kept the sacred fire burning until the missionaries were allowed to return, a quarter of a century later. By that time the little band of Malagasy Christians had actually grown from two hundred to over two thousand.

During the period of persecution one little body of native Christians in a village called Fihaoana, had kept a copy of the Scriptures. On hearing that the queen's officers were coming to search the village they held an anxious consultation to decide upon some secret place in which their Bible might be safely hidden: "for," they said, "if we lose our Bible what will we do?"

A little to the northeast of their village was a hill, near the foot of which stood a cluster of large boulders. Inside that cluster from ten to thirty converts used to hold service each Sunday. Underneath one of the largest of the boulders at the foot of the hill, the people had dug out a cave to serve as a small-pox hospital for the village: in a dark corner of this cave their Bible was hidden between two slabs of granite.

The queen's officers arrived at the village to search for the Bible and other Christian books which the queen and government believed, from the reports of spies, were to be found there. A search was made in vain in the huts of the suspected and in the rice-fields; and then the officers made straight for the cluster of boulders on the hillside. When they were actually on the point of entering the cave where the Bible lay, a villager said, "I suppose that you know that this is the small-pox hospital?" "We did not," they said, starting back in horror. "Wretch! Why did you not tell us sooner? Why did you let us come so near?" The officers beat a hasty retreat—and the Bible was safe. This very volume may be seen in the Bible House Library. The book had been carefully repaired by its native owners, sewn with thread and vegetable fiber, and protected with a cover of roughly tanned skin.—Missionary Gleanings.

Prized in Uganda. I gave out on Sunday that the Gospels of Matthew would be sold on Monday morning. I was roused up before it was light by the roar of voices. Close to my house is a slight shed used for the cows to stand in during the heat of the day. Here the books were and the shed was barricaded to keep the people outside, but it was useless—in came the door and we thought the whole shed was going to fall. In ten minutes all the one hundred books were sold. After breakfast a box containing eight hundred books was opened and they were sold as fast as the others. I think a thou-



The Malagasy "Buried Bible"

sand or more people were waiting about, each with shells to buy a book, but we had no more to sell.—Bishop Tucker, in "Eighteen Years in Uganda."

Open Thou Mine Eyes, that I May See Wonderful Things out of Thy Law. If Josiah knew of the Book of the Law and something of its contents, still the finding of the Temple copy brought Divine truth home to him with freshness and power.

An old saint said that after his conversion it appeared as if the old Bible had been taken up to heaven and a new one brought down in its place, so new and delightful did it seem. There are periods in our lives when revelation is revealed. New light shines out, and it appeals to our reason with fresh authority and assurance. Promises we had hardly noticed, if at all, suddenly become exceedingly precious. At other times, as the Spirit interprets the word, we feel our hearts strangely warmed. Sir Thomas Browne observes: "Some have digged deep, yet glanced by the royal vein; and a man may come unto the neighborhood, but not the heart of, truth." But there are days when we see "the royal vein" we long missed, when we penetrate "the heart of truth."—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

III OBEYING THE BOOK

How to Reverence the Bible. The Bible is not a thing to be worshiped. A savage might bow down to a telescope, but an astronomer knows better. The way to know it is to use it. It is not to be looked at, but to be looked through. To bind a Bible beautifully, to lift it reverently, to speak of it with admiration, to guard it with all care, is not all to the point. Look through it. Find God with it. See what God was to the men of the Bible, and then let him be the same to you. See the proofs of his power, and prove that power for yourself in yourself. Search the Scriptures for the testimony of Jesus, and honor them by being an honor to the One they reveal.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Stundists. About fifty years ago there was a great revival among the German people in southern Russia which led to the conversion of many orthodox Russians: they were given a special name at the time which still clings to them, one which should be appropriate to Christians everywhere. They were called *Stundists*, from the German word *Stunde*, hour or lesson, because they met regularly for the study of the Bible.

In the days of Christ the most common name for a school was *Beth Hasepher*—the House of the Book—because that part of the Bible which we now call the Old Testament was practically the only subject of study. In the Koran, Mohammed usually designates Christians by the phrase "the people of the Book."

People of the Book should we all in truth be, and one cannot begin too early to hide its words in one's heart. Members of "The Berean Band" pledge themselves to learn at least one verse of the Bible accurately every week. Can we not pledge far more? What will be some of the benefits of this hiding its words in our hearts? This is the answer of the Bishop of Durham: "I believe that the presence of all this Bible in the inner mind does tend, by Grace, to sweeten it, like lavender in a linen-chest. And then, in silent and solitary moments, walking by the way, lying awake at night, how beautiful it is to be able to listen to the very voice of God talking out of one's memory into the mind and soul! Ah! What a power it is to warn, to guide, to cheer! Many a moment that would be invaded by sin, or just withered by thoughts of sorrow, is turned into purity and hope by the verse, the psalm, the chapter, said 'by heart,' in silence or with sound. Learn your Bible. A 'step at a time,' a verse a day, or two verses, or ten, as your memory may serve: what a treasure you will gather up ere long! And the Lord of the Word will meet you through the Word, and make your memory his 'telephone' for the very voice of Heaven."

Gaining Bible Students. A few years ago some students from a prominent university attended a large conference of college men at which they learned of the remarkable campaigns for Bible study in American institutions, and caught the vision of hundreds of their own fellow-students studying the Bible. Quietly but determinedly they came together and decided to return to their institution to reach five hundred students for Bible study during the succeeding college year. It seemed an impossible ideal, since

only a handful of students had been studying heretofore, and that in a somewhat half-hearted way; the movement had not been popular. This large endeavor, together with the plans made to reach the attention of every collegian, not only drew closely together the little band of workers, but attracted the notice of the whole University, and a large committee of students began vigorously canvassing the student body. Men came around "to see the thing fail," they said.

The little band of students at the heart of the campaign, like the disciples of the Master, were lifted out of the mediocre by their strenuous work. They were simply obliged to work as well as to pray, for the undertaking was far beyond their capabilities. In two years eleven hundred men were enrolled in the student Bible classes, and the man who was the leader of the work was led to devote his life to Bible study leadership in another nation. Success lay in a large-visioned attempt. It is easier to do a big thing than a small thing.—Clayton Sedgwick Cooper, in "Bible Study in the Work of Life."

Reforms Wrought by the Bible in China. It is about a century since the first Chinese New Testament passed through the press at Canton. When Morrison and Milne completed their translation in 1819, the latter wrote: "We now commit the Chinese Bible to the care of him whose Spirit dictated its contents, praying that he may open many channels for its circulation, dispose many millions to read it, and make it the mighty instruments of illumination and eternal life in China."

At the World's Bible Congress held in San Francisco a paper was read by Dr. John R. Hykes in which he told of the reforms that have been brought in China through the influence of the Bible. Among them he mentioned not only such reforms as the abolition of torture, the decrease of infanticide, the going out of fashion of foot-binding, the tendency to substitute monogamy for polygamy, but also reforms in the administration of justice, the abolition of opium-smoking, the adoption of a national scheme of education, and the growing recognition of the right of free thought, free speech, and free conscience.

Search the Bible. Merely reading the Bible is not what God wants. If a friend were to see me searching about a building and were to say, "Moody, what are you looking for?" and I answered, "I am not looking for anything in particular," I fancy he would think me very foolish. But if I were to say, "I have lost a dollar," then I might expect him to help me find it. Read the Bible as if you were seeking for something of value.—Moody.

Obedience Makes the Bible a Power. Some men have held that the Bible is a power, with a completeness which has seemed almost to lodge the power in the very print and paper of the Book itself. If you were to read it, even mechanically, it would save you. If you opened it, even at random, it would guide you. The Bible believed in and obeyed—that is, the Bible plus belief and obedience—that is power.—Phillips Brooks.

Dr. S. D. Gordon's Way of Getting a Mastery of the Book. Read it prayerfully. It is like many other books in one way, you must get its contents through your mind. The keen mind is better, but it must be also a spirit mind. When you go alone with the book, just kneel or bow quietly and say, "Open thou mine eyes." You will find a new book then. I have sometimes asked a man who took his meals in Hebrew and Greek, the meaning of some simple passage and he didn't know; and I asked some old person who didn't know Greek or Hebrew, but she did know the meaning. But the suggestion is this: Let the Spirit teach you. He'll open your mind and he'll open the book.

The first word here is prayerfully; the second word, thoughtfully. The Bible word is *meditate*. Read thoroughly, meditate. Then the third word is this: obediently. This is an easy word to say and an awfully tough word to do. Many people try to pull the book down to the level of their own lives. They have no fresh power. The thing to do is this: Here is the book, and here is your life. The page says your life isn't quite square. Here change the habit, and by God's grace pull your life up to the book. Then you'll find the book opening to you, and more than opening. Obedience is the light of the soul. Take the book, and the simple mastery of it, and there'll be new power in your lives and in your service.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 15. The Bible is the best gift God has given to man.—Abraham Lincoln.

Verse 18. Young man, my advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures—this is your certain interest.—Benjamin Franklin.

Verse 19. I believe the Bible to be the Word of God because it finds me.—Coleridge.

Verse 30. I speak as a man of the world to men of the world, and I say, Search the Scriptures!—John Quincy Adams.

Verse 30. No man can be considered a truly educated man who is ignorant of the Bible.—President Schurman.

Verse 31. If you were as good as your book, you would conquer India for Christ in five years.—A Brahman to a Missionary.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

A reliable authority has said that there are between eight and ten million homes in the United States without a page of the Bible in them.

"To hide God's Word in the heart, to meditate on it day and night, to live it out in the issues of life, is to companion with the wise and saintly of all time, and to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, himself the Word, the Light, and the Life."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Book of Deuteronomy. See Bible Dictionaries; also pages 29-31 of the 1913 "Guide."

2. The Bible, have we lost it? See "What the Bible has done for the Nation," "The Outlook," Aug. 25, 1915; "Beginning the Day with the Bible," "Sunday School Times," Jan. 24, 1914; "The Supremacy of the Bible," "Biblical World," March, 1916.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How did Josiah meet his death and who was Josiah's successor? (*Guide*, p. 314.) 2. Who was the next king and how long did he reign? (*Guide*, p. 314.) 3. What happened in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign? (*Guide*, p. 314.) 4. Describe the rise of the New Babylonian Empire. (*Guide*, p. 314.) 5. Who was the last king of Judah and what do you know about his reign? (*Guide*, p. 315.) 6. Who was Nebuchadnezzar? (*Guide*, p. 315.) 7. Tell about the recent excavations at Babylon. (*Guide*, p. 316.) 8. When did the first deportation from Jerusalem take place? (*Guide*, p. 315.) 9. Read all the accounts of the capture of Jerusalem: 2 K. 24.18-25.21; 2 Ch. 36.11-21; Jer. 38.28-39.14; 52.1-30. 10. What was the date of the destruction of Jerusalem? 11. How long did the kingdom of Judah last after the fall of Samaria? 12. Whose reign is referred to in verse 1? 13. Read Jeremiah's prophecy of the exile in Jer. 25.3-11. 14. What reason is given in Lam. 1.8 for the fall of Jerusalem? 15. How was the prophecy of Ezek. 12.12 fulfilled? 16. Where was Riblah? 17. Describe the course from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Questions to Think About. 1. How long did Jerusalem hold out? 2. Who were "those that fell to the king of Babylon," verse 11? (*Guide*, p. 313.) 3. What were the chief causes that led to the captivity? (*Guide*, p. 317.) 4. What warning had the people of Judah in an event that occurred 134 years before this? (Fall of Samaria.) 5. Why did Nebuchadnezzar have the people taken to Babylon? 6. Why was the Captivity the best thing that could happen to Judah? 7. Does retribution always follow wrong? 8. Is merited punishment always a good thing?

Questions upon Second Chronicles. 1. What history is given in Second Chronicles? 2. In what is the writer especially interested? 3. What are the lessons of the book for today? (For answers, see page 33 of our Introduction.)

Note-Book Work. Write "VIII: The Finding of the Book of the Law in the Reign of Josiah."

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

Golden Text

As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Ezekiel 33.11

LESSON II Kings 25.1-21: verses 1-12 printed MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about. 2 So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 3 On the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. 4 Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about); and *the king* went by way of the Arabah. 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. 6 Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. 7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

8 Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem. 9 And he burnt the house of Jehovah, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house, burnt he with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were *with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11 And the residue of the people that were left in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the residue of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away captive. 12 But the captain of the guard left of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Siege of Jerusalem, 1-3.
- II. The Flight and Fate of Zedekiah, 4-7.
- III. The Fall of Jerusalem, 8-10.
- IV. The Fate of the People, 11-12.

1-21. Read the parallel accounts in Jer. 39.1-10; 52.1-34; 2 Ch. 36.11-21.

1. *The ninth year of his reign.* Of Zedekiah's reign, 586 B.C.—*In the tenth month.* The Babylonian calendar here followed numbered its months from the spring season; the tenth month was January.—*Nebuchadnezzar.* The more correct spelling is Nebuchadrezzar.—*Built forts against it.* These "forts" were probably movable towers from which missiles could be discharged over the city walls.

2. *Unto the eleventh year.* Jerusalem held out during a siege of eighteen months. From Jer. 3.4, 7 we know that a part of Nebuchadnezzar's troops were engaged in attacking Lachish and Azekah at this time, and from Jer. 37.5, 11 that the reported approach of an army from Egypt caused such a relaxing of the siege that Jeremiah ventured to attempt an escape from the city.

3. *The famine was sore in the city.* Read the description in Jer. 21.7-9; Lam. 4.8-10; 5.10.

4. *When a breach was made in the city.* Then all the princes of Babylon entered the city and sat in solemn council in the middle gate, Jer. 39.3.—*And all the men of war fled.* When they saw that the princes of Babylon had entered the city, Jer. 39.4.—*By the way of the gate between the two walls, which*

was by the king's garden. "On the south of the city, probably the 'fountain gate' of Nehemiah, the two walls being those below this gate along the west side of the east hill of Jerusalem, and the east side of the west hill" (Driver).—*Now the Chaldeans were against the city round about.* Hence there was little chance for them to make good their escape.—*The Arabah.* A name given the whole valley from the Sea of Galilee southward to the desert beyond the Dead Sea.

5. *Overtook him in the plains of Jericho.* He had hoped to escape by the ford here to the mountainous region on the other side of the Jordan.

6. *They took the king.* Made him a prisoner.—*To Riblah.* Where Nebuchadnezzar was awaiting news of the victory.—*They.* The men appointed to pass sentence upon the prisoner.

7. *They slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes.* And all the nobles of Judah, Jer. 39.6. The royal family and the influential men were slain that there might be no revolt.—*Put out the eyes of Zedekiah.* Ezekiel had predicted that he should not see Babylon, Ezek. 12.12, 13. See below. Recall the blinding of Samson, Jud. 16.21.—*Bound him in fetters.* Bound him hand and foot.—*And carried him to Babylon.* And put him in prison till the day of his death. Jer. 52.11.

8. *Came Nebuzaradan.* An officer sent to complete the annihilation of Jerusalem.—*The captain of the guard.* "Literally, chief of the executioners, i. e., of the king's body guard, to whom such duties fell."

9. The work of devastation was thoroughly done.

11. *The residue of the people.* The better citizens, who had remained faithful to their country.—*Those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon.* Who had gone over to the Babylonian side.—*The residue of the multitude.* The useful workers.—*Did Nebuzaradan carry away captive.* To Babylon. "The Assyrians had already noticed that the strong roots of the power of an individual as well as of a nation lie in its native soil. Home and country mutually determine each other and form an inseparable union. In those days they did so more than now, for then religion also was an integral part of the nation, and religion, too, was indissolubly associated with the soil. A nation's country was the home and dwelling place of its national Deity, to be torn away from one's native soil was equivalent to being torn away from him, and thus was destroyed the strongest bond and the deepest source of nationality" (Cornill). For an account of their life in exile see page 324.

12. *Left of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.* To cultivate the land.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *Put out the eyes of Zedekiah.* The blinding of prisoners was a common practice among the Babylonians, Assyrians and Persians. Once it was the custom for the Sultan of Turkey on ascending the throne to slay or blind all his half-brothers. Our illustration is from a marble slab found at Khorsabad, and represents Sargon of Assyria holding a prisoner by a thong attached to a ring inserted in his under-lip and thrusting a spear into his eye.



Sargon Blinding a Prisoner

Nebuchadnezzar's inscription reads: "To far off lands, distant hills, from the upper sea to the lower sea, immense journeys, . . . I pursued, and the disobedient I reduced, the rebellious I fettered." There is in the British Museum a pair of bronze fetters weighing nearly nine pounds which were found at Nineveh and probably resemble those with which Zedekiah was bound.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Recall the lessons of the quarter and tell which kings were evil and which were good. By what nation was Samaria captured? When? Where were the people of the Northern Kingdom exiled? How was their land populated?

Death of Josiah and Egyptian Control of Judah. In 608 B.C. Josiah advanced to Megiddo (in the southwestern part of the Plain of Esdraelon) and there rashly withstood the great army of Necho, King of Egypt, who was on his way to the Euphrates. Necho was victorious, Josiah was slain, and Judah passed under the control of Egypt.

As Dean Stanley says, Josiah was the last royal hero of Israel, and with his death the history of the Jewish monarchy might end, were it not for the one great event and one great person that still remained in the Fall of Jerusalem and the Prophet Jeremiah.

Jehoiakim's Reign. After Josiah was slain in battle his son Jehoahaz was made king, but the latter reigned only three months, for Necho, by right of his victory at Megiddo, made Jehoahaz a prisoner, appointed Eliakim, another of Josiah's sons, king under the name of Jehoiakim, and exacted a heavy tribute.

Jehoiakim's reign lasted eleven years and was an evil one. He utterly disregarded the Book of the Law which his father Josiah made the people covenant to obey. Early in his reign the prophet Jeremiah condemned the priests and the people alike for their blind reliance on the inviolableness of the Temple,



Jewish Captives. From Sculptures at Kouyunjik

which he threatened with ruin like that which befell the ancient sanctuary at Shiloh, and he laid bare the shallowness of the religious revival which had prospered only as long as King Josiah's strong hand ruled.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Jeremiah wrote down the warnings which he had been uttering for about a quarter of a century, in the hope that their reading might yet lead king and people to repent. The reading of the roll made a profound impression on the princes, and it was then brought and read to the king. One column was read and Jehoiakim recognized the words of warning. Another, and his anger grew. A third, and he became blind with rage as he heard that the king of Babylon was to come and destroy his kingdom, and snatching away the roll he cut it into pieces and threw it on to the burning coals before him. Jeremiah dictated his words a second time, adding in regard to the king that no son of his should sit upon his throne, and that his dead body should lie unburied. Less than a dozen years later the king of Babylon sent his army and Jerusalem fell before them.

The New Babylonian Empire. For a long time the great power in the East has been Assyria, but toward the end of the seventh century B.C. the great Assyrian lion (Isa. 5.29) was in his death throes, and a new power from southern Babylonia rapidly gained the ascendancy. This power was Chaldea, in the lowlands around the head of the Persian Gulf. About 604 B.C. an Assyrian general named Nabopolassar was sent by the king of Nineveh to put down an insurrection in Babylon. He put himself at the head of the Babylonians, joined these enemies of his country in a successful attack on Nineveh, usurped the throne, and transferred the capital from Nineveh to Babylon, thus founding the New Babylonian Empire.

Nabopolassar's son and successor was Nebuchadnezzar, a brilliant general and

astute statesman, who reigned forty-three years. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign he defeated Necho, king of Egypt, at the battle of Carchemish (604 B.C.) by the Euphrates, and became master of Western Asia. This was the time that Jeremiah wrote his words of warning.

The First Deportation under Jehoiachin. Three months after Jehoiakim's death (597 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar came and besieged Jerusalem. He carried Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, who had been king during these three months, into exile in Babylon with officials and notables of his court, together with the leading craftsmen and their families, at least twenty thousand in all.

Zedekiah's Reign. Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, a brother of Jehoiakim, on the throne of Judah as his vassal. For four or five years Zedekiah remained submissive to his Chaldean master. The prophet Ezekiel (chapter 8) gives a picture of the idolatry which prevailed in Jerusalem at this time. In 588 B.C. Hophra became Pharaoh of Egypt and Zedekiah plotted with that monarch to help him cast off his yoke of bondage. Nebuchadnezzar's army suddenly appeared and began the siege of Jerusalem. The Egyptian army moved to Jerusalem's relief, and Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege to attack the Egyptians.

The Fall of Jerusalem. The siege was resumed and the city was finally taken "when all the bread was spent," in 586 B. C. Thus the kingdom of Judah came to an end. The captivity lasted fifty years from this time, and then "the remnant" returned to Palestine.

The Giant of Babylon. "Nebuchadnezzar is well described as the 'Giant of Babylon,'" writes the Rev. W. M. Clow in "The Sunday School Times." "Greatness is stamped on all he said and did. He was a man cast in an imperial mold—great-souled, broad-minded, large-hearted. He was the master mind of his generation. No man in his dominions had his reach and grasp in statecraft or in strategy. When we think of Nebuchadnezzar we must class him with Napoleon, or Peter the Great, or Charlemagne, or with the man to whom he was most akin, Alexander of Macedon.

"He was great in war. In his early years, while his father, Nabopolassar, was king in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar was the prince and darling of the vast Chaldean armies, and shared in the subjugation of Nineveh, the rival empire. When he came to the throne, he set himself to conquer the world as he knew it. He tamed the Bedweens of Arabia from the Red Sea to the uplands of Asia Minor. He took Tyre, which thought itself impregnable in its island keep, after a thirteen years' siege. He crumpled up the power of Egypt. He sat down before Jerusalem, angered by its proud rebelliousness, and after eighteen months of waiting sacked the city, and carried off the flower of its people as captives. 'Thou, O King,' said Daniel, 'art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory.'

"He was even greater as a statesman and administrator. In the East to this day the fame of Nebuchadnezzar rests, not upon his soldierly exploits, but on his achievements in the arts of peace. In his public works he displayed a genius which shows his massive mind and his cultured taste. In walls and water-works, in parks and gardens, in temples and palaces, he proved himself to be one of the master-builders of all time. It may be questioned if the world will ever again see such a city as this far-spreading garden-city of Babylon. Its citizens delighted in a costly refinement and ease. They reveled in luxury. In vessels of gold and silver, in soft carpets and dainty curtains—a manufacture which persists to this day—and in instruments of music, its workmen held as high a place in art as its sages kept in the wisdom of their time. We need not wonder that as Nebuchadnezzar walked on the roof of his palace, and looked out over the city he had built, his heart was lifted up, and he needed to be taught that 'those who walk in pride God is able to abase.'"

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Jerusalem to Riblah. Zedekiah and his warriors escaped through the southern gates and fled down the Kidron Valley to the Valley of the Jordan (the Arabah), but were captured on the Plains of Jericho. Then he was taken a prisoner two hundred miles northward to Riblah on the upper Orontes, about one hundred miles north of Dan, where Nebuchadnezzar

was stationed. There his sons and the princes were slain and he was blinded, and then he was taken in fetters to Babylon.

The Route to Babylon. A month later (Jer. 52.4) the bulk of the population of Judah was deported to Babylon. They did not go directly east across the desert, but northward to Damascus, then across to the Euphrates, and southeastward to Babylonia.

Assyria, Babylonia, Chaldea.

Keep in mind that while Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea lay in the region watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates, Assyria proper was on the north on both sides of the Tigris; Babylonia proper was south of Assyria between the Tigris and the Euphrates, and Chaldea proper was on the Persian Gulf southeast of Babylonia. At the time of the capture of Jerusalem the names of Babylonia and Chaldea both referred to the New Babylonian Kingdom founded by Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar.



Countries of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley

were one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, and that the huge temple of Bel was grander than any of the other ancient temples. Its site has long been covered over to a depth of fifty feet in places by the soil thrown upon it by the floods from the Euphrates River. In recent years German archaeologists have dug through to the foundations of the ancient city. The very temple of Nebuchadnezzar has been unearthed, and men living in the twentieth century after Christ can walk over the pavement on which he walked seven centuries before Christ. Each brick in Nebuchadnezzar's palace is stamped with his name and royal titles in cuneiform script. The throne hall is an immense room, and the intricacy of the passages, rooms, and courts is said to be bewildering.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Begin with Charles Reade's account of a people banished from their homes, p. 318.

For Older Pupils. The Septuagint Version of the Book of Lamentations begins with these words: "And it came to pass, after Israel had been carried into captivity and Jerusalem had been laid waste that Jeremiah sat weeping and lamenting with this lamentation over Jerusalem and said." Near the Damascus Gate on the north of Jerusalem there is a cave called Jeremiah's Grotto, which tradition says is the very spot where the prophet sat while writing this Book. Although the Hebrew version is anonymous, it is generally believed that the Book is the work of Jeremiah. The Book is read by pious Jews every Friday afternoon at the Jews' Wailing Place in the city of Jerusalem and on the ninth of August, the anniversary of the day on which the Temple was burned, it is read in Jewish synagogues the world over.

For many lessons we have seen the destruction of Jerusalem slowly but surely approaching. Now we see its advent. The record is told dispassionately: it should be supplemented by the Book of Lamentations with its account of the horrors of the siege, and the pathos of the capture and destruction of the city, with its confession of sin, its acknowledgment that the punishment was of God for the sins of the nation, with its assurance that God pitied where he punished, and with its faith that in his mercy God would "renew their days as of old."

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is brought upon me, wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Thus the author of Lamentations expresses the intensity of his grief over the calamity which we today see befall his people.

Listen to him as in the first two chapters he bids us contemplate Jerusalem:
How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!
She is become as a widow, that was great among the nations!
She that was a princess among the provinces, is become tributary!
Hear, I beseech you, all ye peoples, and behold my sorrow:
My virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.
Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars:
Her kings and her princes are among the nations where the law is not;
What shall I liken to thee, O virgin daughter of Zion?
All that pass by clap their hands at thee;
They hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying,
Is this the city that men called
The perfection of beauty,
The joy of the whole earth?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE WAGES OF SIN

Coming Events Cast Their Shadows Before. Zedekiah anticipated his doom. Long before he was carried captive into Babylon did he exile himself from God. His sins separated him from the strength of Israel from the very beginning of his reign. Long before the infatuated monarch was blinded by Nebuchadnezzar did he permit the prince of darkness to blind the eyes of his understanding. Long before he was put in fetters of iron did Zedekiah forge the fetters for himself, link by link.

Coming events cast their shadows before. We are all determining our doom. On the foreheads of the righteous, diadems begin to take shape already; and the chains of the lost are already being forged and felt.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

The Cause of the Captivity. A modern historian might say that Jerusalem was captured because Hezekiah and his army were no match for the great Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, and because the last kings of Judah had followed a very unwise policy in trying to escape the Assyrian and then the Babylonian yoke by relying on help from Egypt. All this was true, but while these may seem the primary reasons for the Captivity, they are in fact only secondary. Back of the political causes were the moral causes. Judah had grievously sinned (Lam. 1.8), had become thoroughly corrupt, idolatry with all the evils in its train had spread with rapid pace during the last years of the kingdom, till only the severest measures could discipline her. The punishment of exile was sent by God, who employed Nebuchadnezzar as his servant (Jer. 25.9; 27.6), in working his will. Jehovah hath afflicted Jerusalem for the multitude of her transgressions (Lam. 1.5). The ax which was carried before a Roman Consul was bound up in a bundle of rods to show that the extreme penalty was never inflicted until milder means had failed. Milder means had been tried with the chosen people of God: the prophets had constantly warned them, many of the people had been carried away captive, and the treasures of the temple had been taken. Very patient and long-suffering had God been with them till, even as a physician counsels an operation as "a last resort," he used the drastic remedy of captivity to work their ultimate cure. It proved efficacious. In Babylonia they gave up their gross idolatry, and the faithful remnant that returned were loyal to Jehovah their God.

I Have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked. In the words of "Lamentations":

"The Lord will not cast off forever:
For though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according
to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.
For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.
Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah.
Turn thou us unto thee, O Jehovah, and we shall be turned;
Renew our days as of old."

"The great enemy would like to have us think of God as a harsh judge and perhaps even as an angry avenger; but he is always our loving, considerate Father. The very word 'chastening' means 'child training'; and he wants

us even in the heat of the furnace to realize that it costs him more than us to inflict upon us the slightest pain."

Retribution, though Long Delayed, is Sure. When the Superintendent of Schools of Kansas City was a sixteen-year-old boy he worked on a plantation in Arkansas. One day he was plowing with a mule and a cow, but the mule was often balky and gave his driver much trouble. After making many unsuccessful attempts to make the mule work, "Jim," as he was then called, took a rope and making a slip-knot in one end, placed it round the lower jaw of the mule, and tied the other end of the rope to the fetlock of that hind leg which was doing the kicking. Then he went back to the plow-handle, and gave the usual signal for the team to start. The mule immediately began to kick, but found that every motion of the hind leg pulled painfully upon the lower jaw, and the kicking stopped. Then Jim took off the rope, returned to the plow-handles, and repeated his command to go ahead. The team started at once, and plowed straight onward without any more kicking from the mule.

Would that every act of disobedience could bring at once upon each human being its fitting retribution. Because evil is not punished at once, many seem to believe that it never will be. Our lesson illustrates the truth that though "God's patience stretches from generation to generation, and his judgments tarry because he is not willing that any should perish, yet for all the long-suffering there comes a time when even Divine love sees that it is needful to say 'now' and the bolt falls."

A Lesson from a Sponge. A sponge had floated out with the undertow, feeling for a footing, and had at last drifted upon a young conch, a naturalist explains. Its gelatinous feelers had fastened on the cusp and had clung there. Thus anchored, the sponge grew and grew, careless of the discomfort that it caused the conch. Finally the conch, seeking to free itself of its burden, had dug deep in the mud. Nature teaches these mollusks to clean their shells in this way. This exactly suited the sponge, for once rooted in the mud with such a burden on its back the conch could rise no more, and so, buried alive in the grave which it had dug for itself, it perished miserably. So sin fastens itself upon a young life, merely causing discomfort at first, but when permitted to stay and grow, it eventually drags that life down to a miserable death.

The Wages of Sin is Death. The wife of a millionaire in New York ran away with another man whom she thought her "affinity." A week before she took her own life she said to a friend: "You and I, living in this reckless city, young and heedless, may laugh sometimes at law and religion, thinking them good enough for old fogies. We may sneer at its penalties when they say 'Thou shalt not,' but, my friend, there comes a time to all of us when we know its truth, law and religion are right. What they say we shall not do, we cannot do without suffering, and I have learned that 'the wages of sin is death.'"

II EXILED

Exiled in Burgundy. It is interesting and helpful to observe how a modern writer has conceived and portrayed these most pathetic features of a people's banishment. It is a simple and commonplace scene of the fifteenth century that Charles Reade describes in a brief passage in "The Cloister and the Hearth." For the better cultivation of a depopulated district the Duke of Burgundy had ordered that a few score of people be transferred thither from their own native village. They are met by two fellow-travelers—a soldier of fortune and the hero of the story himself, a fugitive from Holland. The cry of "Long live the Duke!" is raised by the soldiers, and then "a loud and piercing wail broke from every woman's bosom, and a deep, deep groan from every man's. Oh! the air filled in a moment with womanly and manly anguish." At this the sergeant remarks, "*Le ingrats!* they are going whence they were *de trop* to where they will be welcome—from a starvation to plenty, and they object; they even make dismal noises. One would think we were thrusting them forth from Burgundy." "Come away," whispered Gerard, trembling—"come away," and the friends strode forward. When they passed the head of the column, and saw the men walk with their eyes bent in bitter gloom upon the ground, and the women, some carrying, some leading, little children, and weeping as they went, and the poor bairns, some frolicking, some weeping because their mothers wept, Gerard tried hard to say a word of comfort, but

choked, and could utter nothing to the mourners . . . 'Decant them?' he groaned. 'Ay, if blood were no thicker than wine. Princes, ye are wolves. Poor things! poor things! Ah, Denys! Denys! with looking on their grief mine own comes home to me.' "

Thus the great dramatist, with truest art, sets forth the essential character of one of the most dreadful of human calamities by revealing how hideous and mournful it is, even when it seems most vulgar and insignificant.—Dr. H. V. Hilprecht, in an article on "Latest Research in Bible Land," "Sunday School Times."

The Latest Banishment from Palestine. After recounting the sufferings in Belgium and Russo-Poland, an editorial in the "Jewish Chronicle" of September, 1915, contains these words about the Jews of Palestine:

"From Palestine a migration of our people took place, and though their lot was sad beyond words they found a ready refuge in Egypt, thus setting at defiance history, which marked the path of our people from the land of Pharaoh to that of the Cedars, and a traditional command that to the scene of Israel's primeval persecution Israel should not return. But *autres temps autres moeurs*, and these new wanderers into Egypt were received by a beneficent government, which happily possesses traditions that would forbid the closing of the door on a people's plight. The personal affliction of the war upon the Jews in Palestine, however, great and grievous as it is, is infinitely less than the moral affliction upon Jewry as a whole. The exiles from Palestine who fled to Egypt, as they wept by the waters of the new Babylon, wept not alone for their personal hurt. They, like our forefathers whom the Psalmist dirges, remembered Zion. The colonies which were the pride of all our people were desolate; the labor of love, carried on with devotion and zeal through long and trying years to a success that had passed all expectations, was dissipated like chaff before the wind. The stroke of ill-fortune which has fallen upon Palestine and upon its Jewish indwellers has been the sorest blow that the war has inflicted upon us as a people. In God's good time we will repair the breach and restore the paths. But the disaster is a distinct set-back to Jewry in its march from servitude to freedom, from the degradation to which fate consigned us, to the proud world-position which in our darkest hours, with the relentlessness of unbroken and unbreakable faith, we have never ceased to assign to our people."

Armenian Exiles. A letter just received from The American Armenian Relief Committee contains the following sad account of what exiles today are suffering:

Among the greatest sufferers by the European war have been the Armenian Christians. Massacres by the Kurds and Turks have again broken out. A multitude of Armenians whose homes have been ruined and burned have fled across the frontiers from Turkey and Persia into Russia. There are about 250,000 of these refugees, most of them women and children. "Never in my life have I seen such suffering," writes Tolstoy's daughter, Alexandra, who is serving with the Red Cross near the frontier. Some of the refugees in her hospital had their hands and feet cut off. All were emaciated and in tatters. They are not only destitute but broken-hearted, many having seen their husbands and children slaughtered before their eyes. Official and private letters just received from Etchmiadzin, the metropolitan monastery at the foot of Mount Ararat, Russian Armenia, report that from 200 to 250 refugees are perishing daily, from starvation or pestilence.

In Turkey, where every able-bodied man has been forced into the army, the condition of the women and children is even worse, ravages of famine being added to those of Kurdish savagery. In one town not a grown person was found, only 500 orphans.

Most heart-rending is the fate of the inhabitants of many towns in Armenia and Asia Minor, who have been exiled wholesale, and whose houses and lands have been given to Mohammedan immigrants from Balkan countries. The men of these families have been detained for some unknown purpose—most of them murdered—and the women and children have been sent to distant regions of Mesopotamia and Konia, to perish, far from friends and co-religionists.

A correspondent of high standing, whose word is not to be doubted, gives the following account of the situation, in a letter from Constantinople: "The Turkish Government is executing today the plan of scattering the Armenians of the Armenian provinces, profiting from the troubles of the European powers and from the acquiescence of Germany and Austria. All these people are being

removed without any of their goods and chattels, and to places where the climate is totally unsuited to them. They are left without shelter, without food, and without clothing. It is impossible to read or to hear without shedding tears, even the meager details of these deportations. Armenian communities from all the provinces of Armenia, from Erzerum, Trebizond, Sivas, Harput, Bitlis, Van and Diarbekir, also from Samsun, Cesarea and Urfa—a population of 1,500,000 are marching today, the stick of forced pilgrimage in hand, toward the Mesopotamian wilderness, to live among Arabian and Kurdish savage tribes. Very few of them will be able to reach the spots designated for their exile, and those who do will perish from starvation, if no immediate relief reaches them."

III TESTED BY CALAMITY

The People of Judah Were Sifted as Wheat. In the close of the Book of Amos occurs this prophecy: "Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth." In the exile Israel was in truth sifted; the chaff, the irreligious, separated from the good kernels, the religious. The exile that seemed such a grievous calamity was a great opportunity that prepared the nation for a greater career.

A Lesson from an Exiled Plant. I remember that once a friend of mine was sent a rare plant, which he set in a big flower-pot close to a fountain-basin. It never thrived; it lived, indeed, putting out in the spring a delicate, stunted foliage, though my friend, who was a careful gardener, could never divine what ailed it. He was away for a few weeks, and the day after he went the flower-pot was broken by a careless garden boy, who wheeled a barrow roughly past it. The plant, earth and all, fell into the water; the boy removed the broken pieces of the pot, and, seeing that the plant had sunk to the bottom of the little pool, never troubled his head to fish it out.

When my friend returned he noticed one day in the fountain a new and luxuriant growth of some unknown plant. He made careful inquiries, and found out what had happened. It then came out that the plant was in reality a water-plant, and that it had pined away in the stifling air for want of nourishment, perhaps dimly longing for the fresh bed in the pool.

Even so it has been times without number with some starving and thirsty soul that has gone on feebly trying to live a maimed life, shut up in itself, ailing, feeble. There has descended upon it what looks at first sight like a calamity, some affliction unaccountable, and then it proves that this was the one thing needed, that sorrow has brought out some latent unselfishness, or suffering energized some unused faculty of strength and patience."—A. C. Benson, in "The Christian Advocate."

Test Me, but Don't Throw Me on the Scrap-pile. There is a valuable lesson for all of us in the words of a blacksmith, spoken in answer to a friend's question as to why the smith had so much trouble. "I thought that when a man gave himself to God his troubles were over," said the friend.

"Do you see this piece of steel?" the blacksmith replied. "It is to be used for the springs of a carriage. But it needs to be 'tempered.' In order to do this, I heat it red-hot, and then cool it with water. If I find it will take a 'temper' I heat it again; then I hammer it and bend it and shape it, so it will be suitable for the carriage. Often I find the steel too brittle, and it cannot be used. If so, I throw it on the scrap-pile. Those scraps are worth less than one cent a pound; but this carriage spring is valuable."

He paused and his listener nodded. The blacksmith continued: "God saves us for something more than to have a good time. That's the way I see it. We have the good time all right, for the smile of God means heaven. But he wants us for service, just as I want this piece of steel. And he puts the 'temper' of Christ in us by testings and trials. Ever since I saw this I have been saying to him, 'Test me in any way you choose, Lord; only don't throw me on the scrap-pile.'"

The Noblest Thing in Man is Tested Character. Flower seeds are dashed upon the ground by the wind, frozen into the solid ice, submerged by the overflowing river. Their roots contend with poor soil, and even with rocks; the growing stems elbow upward in competition with the weeds that would

supplant them; the rain drenches them, the wind racks them, the sun scorches them, hail pummels them, insects attack them. But when at length the flowers burst into bloom, Christ points to them as examples of God's care.

Birds, from the time their eggs are laid until their young are fully grown, must fight the foes that threaten their treasures. Squirrels and jays destroy their eggs; snakes and hawks kill their young. In the autumn food fails and most birds have to migrate. On the way southward they are beset with peril from exhausting fights, uncertain food supplies, birds of prey, sudden storms, and murderous guns. They run a similar gauntlet when they return to us in the spring. But they come back in full song, and Christ points to them as examples of the Heavenly Father's care.

In caring for us, God uses the means that make the strongest manhood. To expect him to keep us in ease, without testing our faith, proving our courage, enlarging our sympathies, or deepening our love, and without bringing into our lives the hardships, disappointments, doubts, fears, failures, successes, joys, and triumphs that develop the strongest and noblest character, is to forget that the highest creature of God is man, and that the noblest thing in man is tested character.—"Youth's Companion."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 10. Looking back to the history of nations, we may date the beginning of their decline from the moments when they ceased to be reverent in heart and accumulative in hand and brain.—Ruskin.

Verse 11. As for repealing the law of retribution, we might as well undertake to repeal the law of gravitation.—William R. Huntington.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"The Man without a Country" in Dr. Hale's story, utters no complaint; he knows that he deserves his fate, that he is only reaping the harvest of the seed he has sown. So the people of Judah had the bitter knowledge that their exile was the just punishment for their sins. And many an exile from God today knows that he is responsible for all his woes.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The causes of the fall of Jerusalem. The Book of Lamentations an account of the events and the religious meaning of the fall of Jerusalem and the Captivity.

2. Exiled Nations. See the Third Topic; Belgium in Holland, "The Outlook," March 8, 1916.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who is called the great shepherd in Hebrews? (Heb. 13.20.) 2. Read Jer. 23.1-8 and note the similarity of thought with Ezek. 34. 3. What is said in Matthew about Jesus and sheep having no shepherd? (Mt. 9.36.) 4. With verse 14 compare Is. 40.11. 5. With verse 16 compare Micah 4.6. 6. What do verses 17-22 say? 7. What is said in Mt. 25.32 which verse 17 recalls? 8. How were the Israelites treated in captivity? (*Guide*, p. 324.) 9. Describe their homes. (*Guide*, p. 324.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What lessons did Jesus teach about the lost through his parable of the Prodigal Son? 2. What words of Christ does verse 11 recall? (Lk. 19.10; Jn. 10.11.) 3. Who are "the fat sheep," verse 20? 4. Whom does Ezekiel mean by "my servant David," verse 23? (*Guide*, p. 323.) 5. What words in the twenty-third Psalm does this lesson recall? 6. Comparing Ezek. 37.26 with verse 25 of this lesson, what do you think "a covenant of peace" means? 7. What is the meaning here of "wilderness"? (*Guide*, p. 323.) 8. What are "showers of blessing"? 9. In what sense were the Israelites "bondmen" in Babylon?

Questions upon the Book of Second Kings. 1. What is the framework on which the account of each king is written? 2. What is the literary style of Second Kings? 3. What are its lessons for today? (For answers, see p. 32 of our Introduction.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the verses printed for our next lesson.

In your Note-Book write "IX: The Captivity of Judah in the Reign of Zedekiah."

THE SHEPHERD OF CAPTIVE ISRAEL

Golden Text

Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23:1

LESSON Ezekiel 34: verses 11-16, 23-27 printed
MEMORIZE verse 12

11 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the water-courses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture; and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold; and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. 16 I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice.

23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 24 And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken it.

25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell securely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. 26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in its season; there shall be showers of blessing. 27 And the tree of the field shall yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have broken the bars of their yoke, and have delivered them out of the hand of those that made bondmen of them.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Selfish Shepherds of Israel Denounced, 1-10.
- II. Jehovah's Care of His Flock, 11-16.
- III. The Oppressors of the Weak Denounced, 17-19.
- IV. The New Shepherd and the New Covenant Promised, 20-31.

11. *I will search for my sheep, and will seek them out.* Compare Lk. 19:10: For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost; and Jn. 10:11: I am the good shepherd.

12. *His sheep that are scattered abroad.* Compare Mt. 9:36: But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.—*The cloudy and dark day.* Hebrew, *the day of clouds and thick darkness*, RVm.

14. *I will feed them with good pasture.* Compare Is. 40:11: He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.

16. *I will seek that which was lost.* "We can almost see that harried, panting flock, worried by wolves and dogs, scattered amid the drenching mountain mists, but tracked and gathered by the shepherd-care of God. The Bible is full of hope for the lost, the broken, and the sick" (Meyer).—*I will*

bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken. Compare Micah 4.6: In that day, saith Jehovah, will I assemble that which is lame, and I will gather that which is driven away, and that which I have afflicted.—*The fat and the strong.* Figurative language for the oppressors.—*I will feed them in justice.* That is, in destroying them he is only meting out justice to them.

17-22. The Lord will judge also between the strong and the weak. (The "fat sheep" are the tyrannical leaders of Judah.) The strong sheep have been enjoying the good pasture and drinking the clear water: by force they have driven off the weak sheep, who have been forced to eat what the strong have left and to drink the water that they have befouled with their feet. The Lord will save the weak from being the prey of the strong. Compare Mt. 25.32.

23-27. The promise of the Messianic King, and a description of the blessings that accompany his reign. A Davidic kingdom in some sense is to be the foundation of social order in the new Israel. A prince will arise, endowed with the spirit of his exalted office, to discharge perfectly the royal functions in which the former kings had so lamentably failed. Through him the Divine government of Israel will become a reality in the national life. The Godhead of Jehovah and the kingship of the Messiah will be inseparably associated in the faith of the people: "Jehovah their God, and David their king" (Hosea 3.5) is the expression of the ground of Israel's confidence in the latter days. And this kingdom is the pledge of the fulness of Divine blessing descending on the land and the people. The people shall dwell in safety, none making them afraid, because of the covenant of peace which Jehovah will make for them, securing them against the assaults of other nations. The heavens shall pour forth fertilizing "showers of blessing"; and the land shall be clothed with a luxuriant vegetation which shall be the admiration of the whole earth. Thus happily situated Israel shall shake off the reproach of the heathen, which they had formerly to endure because of the poverty of their land and their unfortunate history. In the plenitude of material prosperity, they shall recognize that Jehovah their God is with them, and they shall know what it is to be his people and the flock of his pasture (Skinner).

23. *I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David.* Ezekiel is thinking of the character of the coming ruler. To him David, the shepherd king, was the type of the ideal ruler, as he was to Jeremiah (Jer. 30.9) and Hosea (Hos. 3.5). The idealized David was the "servant" of the Lord, the "man after God's own heart," his extensive reign was thought of as universal; like him should be the ruler of the restored community. When Jesus, as you remember, declared John the Baptist to be Elijah, he was speaking after the oriental manner which does not distinguish between one who lived long ago and one who appears in his power and spirit: so Ezekiel is not distinguishing here between David and the new ruler who shall appear in his idealized power and spirit. We see in Ezekiel's "servant David" the Messiah, the Good Shepherd.

24. *Prince.* This is a term Ezekiel often uses.

25. *A covenant of peace.* A covenant that shall secure peace. See Ezek. 37.26. "The promise entrusted of deliverance went far beyond that accomplished at the first coming of the Son of David, though it was begun at that coming. We still look eagerly forward to the 'perfect peace,' outward as well as inward, here promised" (Willoughby).—*Evil beasts.* The flock, God's people, had become the prey of evil beasts, heathen nations.—*The wilderness.* Pasture-land, not desert.

26. *Round about my hill.* "There is a hint here of the place which the Temple is to have in the life of the new Israel: see Ezek. 40."—*Showers of blessing.* Showers that bring blessing. In Palestine, where there is so little rain, a shower is a greater blessing than with us.

27. *I have broken up the bars of their yoke.* The oriental yoke consists of a cross-piece into which are inserted four bars of wood, two of which enclose the neck of each ox.—*And have delivered them out of the hand of those that make bondmen of them.* As a nation they were carried away captive, but they were not held individually as slaves in Babylonia, and there is no evidence that they were harshly treated in any way. See the Historical Background.

29. *A plantation for renown.* A planting which shall be renowned.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

13. *I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel.* In ordinary circumstances the shepherd does not feed his flock, except by leading and guiding them where they may gather for themselves; but there are times when it is otherwise. Late in autumn, when the pastures are dried up, and in winter, in places covered with snow, he must furnish them food or they die. In the vast oak woods along the eastern sides of Lebanon there are gathered innumerable flocks, and the shepherds are all day long in the bushy trees, cutting down the branches, upon whose green leaves and tender twigs the sheep and goats are entirely supported. The same is true in all mountain districts, and large forests are preserved for the purpose.—W. M. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book."

30. *They shall know that I, Jehovah their God, am with them.* As the flock journeys on, the leaders will be seen looking up to the shepherd, while the others follow with heads down to the footing, so that you see, for the most part, their bodies only. But let some alarm be heard—some disturbance break out, some hurt befall—at once all heads are lifted, all looking, looking not at the danger, but at the shepherd. Oh, think of this way of peace when all is going well, this way of trust when trouble comes—this lifting of the eyes to the shepherd.—William Allen Knight.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In our lesson about Jesus the Good Shepherd, what did Jesus mean when he called himself "the door of the sheep"? What did he say about false shepherds? What did he say that he did for his sheep? What was our Golden Text for that Lesson? What did Jesus say about knowing his sheep? What did he say about one flock and one shepherd? How have the "sheep of Israel," the people of Jerusalem, been scattered? What sort of shepherds had their rulers been?

The Prophet Ezekiel and His Book. Ezekiel was carried off to Babylon in the earlier deportation with king Jehoiachin in 597 B. C. and was settled by the river Chebar. He began his prophecy about six years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 34. In the first ten verses of this chapter Ezekiel is thinking of the old state of things in Judah, and is denouncing the rulers of Israel as unfaithful shepherds of their flock. To them had been entrusted the care of the people, and they cared only for themselves, using their position to further their own ends, while their people had been scattered over the earth. What they had failed to do, Jehovah himself promises to do; the flock shall be gathered and tended by Jehovah and his servant, David.

How the Exiles Lived in Babylon. In the twenty-seventh verse Ezekiel represents God as promising to break "the bars of their yoke" and to deliver them "out of the hand of those that make bondmen of them," but the prophet is thinking of the Israelites as no longer an independent nation, as subject to the king of Babylon, rather than that they were suffering individually as their forefathers had suffered under the Egyptian yoke. Dr. Edgar James Banks, writing in "The Sunday School Times," tells how free they were:

"The Jew called himself the *Galutha*—the captive, yet he was seldom a slave, for he seems to have been as free as his captors. Possibly upon his first arrival he was compelled to labor upon the great constructions of Nebuchadnezzar, along with the captives of other nations, but not for long. Soon he acquired land of his own to cultivate. He raised barley, wheat, delicious melons and grapes; he collected from the desert truffles and licorice root; he planted and irrigated his date gardens, and between the rows of tall trees he raised pomegranates, oranges, figs, bananas, and vegetables of all sorts. Others were merchants, traveling up and down the canals to Babylon with the produce which they had purchased. A few were brokers and real-estate agents, caring for the property of their clients, and renting their land and houses for so many *mana* of silver or *kas* of dates. Some were jewelers, hammering out the rings of gold, silver, and bronze for the fingers, ears, and nose, not only for the Babylonian women, but for their own wives and daughters. A few were slaves, bought and sold as any other property. He acquired property, paid his tax in produce, lived wherever he chose; probably the only galling restriction placed upon him was the prohibition to leave the country for his native

land. He was allowed the free exercise of his religion, and scrupulously spent the Sabbath with the rabbi of his community, piously bewailing his fate and his absence from Jerusalem.

"From numerous remains it is not difficult to construct their manner of living. The houses in which they dwelt had walls of clay, seldom of burned brick. The single room, as in the modern Babylonian house, was lighted by the door, or a small hole near the roof, to permit the escape of the smoke of the fire. The trunks of the date-palm, split into halves, were laid across the walls for rafters to the roof; above them was a layer or two of matting woven from the reeds from the neighboring swamps, then a thick layer of reed, and finally a foot or more of clay to exclude the rains of winter and the heat of summer.

"The household furniture was simple, differing but little from that employed by the dwellers of Mesopotamia. The mill-stone, the sack of barley meal, the stone knives, the reed mats, the few clay dishes, the olive-oil lamp, the stone weight, a crotched stick for a plow, a baked-clay chicken-coop, and perhaps one or two other objects, completed the effects of the Jew."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

To his pupils the teacher is shepherd and guide. He must accept responsibility for his flock. His shepherding must be careful and unremitting, wise and tender. He must know what are the pitfalls in their way—their temptations; what is to them the valley of the shadow—their sorrows. He must, above all, lead them to the Great Shepherd.

The true shepherd's heart is with his sheep; if one is lost he will seek until he finds it. Possibly ninety per cent of the pupils who have been lost to the school and the church could have been kept had the teachers been vigilant and tactful.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. By questions recall the lesson of April 15th, about Jesus the Good Shepherd.

For Older Pupils. Begin with questions about the prophet Ezekiel and his Book. See pages 34-36 of the 1911 *Guide*.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I JEHOVAH IS MY SHEPHERD

I Will Feed My Flock. We need to be fed. Even when we are born again we are only babes in Christ. We have quality of life; we lack quantity, the forceful, irresistible, abundant life which filled to the full the channels of the Christ. How are we going to gain the abundance? It is largely a matter of diet. "I will feed my flock." We are to be fed into maturity by the bread of life. But how various are the forms of bread which the gracious Providence employs! He suits the bread to the precise conditions of our needs. "Thou givest them their meat in due season." Yes, "in due season"; at the right time the right kind of bread. The Lord's feeding of his children is tenderly discriminating, and to bring us to maturity he uses very varied breads. Let us glance at two or three of the breads which are mentioned in the Sacred Word.

1. "I will feed thee in a good pasture," saith the Lord. Yes, sometimes that is the seasonable feeding-place for the soul. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," and there we should always like to remain. There are sweet and beautiful seasons, when life ceases to be a noisy tumultuous river, when it settles down into "still waters," and we are blessed with quiet visions which come as Heaven's bread. Beautiful are these seasons of holy communion, when life becomes a river of stillness, and we contemplate the things which are divine. The Lord is feeding us in a "fat pasture," giving us meat in due season.

"I will feed thee with the bread of tears." That is another of the means by which I am to pass out of babyhood into manhood, out of initial straits into "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Tears as bread: I do not think it means the tears that we shed because of our own griefs, but tears shed because of the grief of others. These tears constitute bread, and enlarge our souls. Sympathy is feeding. It has sometimes happened that a whole family has been fed by the presence of an invalid child. Tender

tones have stolen into the voice; a strange gentleness has come into the hand; the loud, thoughtless tramp has gone out of the footfall; jangling has given place to a subdued harmony which has been "like snatches from the songs above." The affections have been made more and more sensitive, responsive and vibrant to another's grief.

3. "I will feed thee with the bread of adversity"; not only with sympathy for the grief of others, but with personal grief of thine own. The bread of hardness! Do we not all know the experience in common life? We were expecting soft and toothsome food, and lo, it became in our mouths as gravel. "Tomorrow," we said, "we will sit down to a feast"; and when the morrow came, our table was spread with the bread of adversity. "We have toiled all night, and taken nothing!" "The bread of hardness!" "Endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ"; endure hardness, and so become still better soldiers of Jesus Christ.

"I will feed my flock." The good Lord has many breads. "Give us this day our daily bread."—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "The Folly of Unbelief."

I Shall Not Want. I may not possess all that I wish for, but "I shall not want." Others far wealthier and wiser than I may want, but "I shall not." "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." It is not only "I do not want," but "I shall not want." Come what may, if famine should devastate the land, or calamity destroy the city, "I shall not want." Old age with its feebleness shall not bring me any lack, and even death with its gloom shall not find me destitute. I have all things and abound; not because I have a good store of money in the bank, not because I have skill and wit with which to win my bread, but because "The Lord is my Shepherd." The wicked always want, but the righteous never; a sinner's heart is far from satisfaction; but a gracious spirit dwells in the palace of content.—C. H. Spurgeon.

Under the Good Shepherd's Care. Christ the Shepherd—we the sheep of his flock. It is the tender relationship, sweet, idyllic, beautiful. A shepherd—he is kind, and patient and gentle, if he be a shepherd worthy the name; he is also one of the most absolute rulers the world contains. The sheep, I suppose, stands as the type of most utter helplessness, making blunders whenever there is the slightest chance of making them, running into danger as if it loved it, about the most pitifully incapable thing on God's earth. The Shepherd, though he rule kindly, must preserve the strictness of his rule. And in Christ's view we are the sheep who do not know the way and have no life except what he, the Shepherd, makes for them. He is the Good Shepherd; and that means that he will be running over with graciousness, compassionate with the wounded and the tired ones; but if he is the Shepherd, we are the sheep, and that means that to take all from him is the only thing we can safely do. So when Christ speaks of himself as the Shepherd of the sheep, he wants us to combine in our thought about him these two things—his absolute, authoritative superiority, and his sweet, familiar, condescending care.

The figure suggests the constancy of a man's dependence on Christ, its persistence, its permanence. The sheep are never educated to a point where they can do without a shepherd's care. Our attachment to Christ is not simply a new beginning for us, a means by which we obtain a fresh start. As dependent as we are today, so dependent must we always remain: in this matter of the true life there is no strengthening of faculty which will at last enable us to do without shepherding and accomplish everything for ourselves: Christ does not take us in charge in order that he may train us to stand alone. There are certain directions in which we are not to look for progress: the only progress we are to look for is the progress in the power of obtaining more from Christ, in letting his shepherding of us have more complete effect. Christ is not the schoolmaster in matters of the spiritual life, keeping us under his hands for a while, and then sending us forth with our education finished to act out the principles he has instilled. He is the Shepherd whose work or care is never done. To enter, not upon independence, but upon a complete and more continuous dependence, is the only progress that has worth. The perfected life is not the life grown so strong that it needs no shelter any more, but the life which never quits the Shepherd's fold.—Henry W. Clark, in "The Christ from Without and Within."

I Will Set Up One Shepherd over Them. A year and a quarter ago I was passing on foot through the native kingdom of Uganda, in Central Africa. Uganda is the most highly developed of the pure negro States in Africa. It is the State which has given the richest return for missionary labor. It now contains some half-million of Christians, the direction of the government being in the hands of those Christians. I was interested to find that in their victorious fight against, in the first place, heathendom, and, in the next place, Moslemism, the native Christians belonging to the several different sects, both Catholics and Protestants, had taken as their symbol "the Book," sinking all minor differences among themselves, and coming together on the common ground of their common belief in "the Book" that was the most precious gift the white man had brought to them.—Theodore Roosevelt, in "The Outlook."

II I WILL SEEK THAT WHICH IS LOST

The Good Shepherd Searches the "Far Country" for His Lost Sheep. "I will bring them . . . out of all places where they have been scattered." He goes into the hard wilderness of cold indifference, and wasteful pride, and desolating sin, searching "high and low" for his foolish sheep. And no place is unvisited by the Great Seeker! Every perilous ravine where a sheep can be lost knows the footprints of the Shepherd. And he knows my far-country, and he is seeking me!

And the Good Shepherd brings his wandering sheep back home. "I will bring them . . . to their own land." We return from the land of pride to the home of lowliness, from hard indifference to gracious sympathy, from the barrenness of sin to the beauty of holiness. We come back to God's beautiful "illy-land" of eternal light and peace.

And what nutriment the Good Shepherd provides for the home-coming sheep! "I will feed them in a good pasture." Our wasted powers shall be renewed and strengthened by the fattening diet of grace. Love shall be both host and meat! "He will satisfy thy mouth with good things."—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in "My Daily Meditation."

The Lesson Which Some Lost Sheep Need. A shepherd once had a wild lamb that gave him more trouble than all the rest of the flock. It was often getting lost, and he feared that it would some time stray so far away it could never be found and then it would starve to death or be eaten by wild beasts. Finally he took the lamb and broke one of its legs. That seemed a cruel thing to do, but it was the only way he could save it. Then he set the leg and tenderly bound it up, and day after day carried the helpless lamb in a sling from his shoulders, feeding it from his hands. When the leg was healed and the lamb was placed upon its feet it never again left the good shepherd's side.

The Lost in the Great Cities. Once a year the police commissioner of New York City publishes a list of persons who have disappeared. Last year nearly four thousand dropped out of sight. Many were found, yet there remained at the end of the year seven hundred and twenty-five to be set down as "still missing."

What chapters in the book of life this record holds! From North and East and South and West, over thousands of miles, the great candle of the metropolis draws its human moths. They dance a little while in its light, and some find places of permanent safety and happiness. Others, perhaps less wise, perhaps only more tender, are scorched by the flame, drop with singed wings, and crawl away to hide in the first dark, friendly corner that presents itself.

And this is but one side of the tragedy. The other end of the thread leads, it may be, to some far-off country home, where a chair, still placed at the table, remains unoccupied, and a name, although never out of mind, remains unspoken.

Police captains in any large city will tell you of quiet, patient figures that go from station to station, and from hospital to hospital, asking their pathetic questions, peering ever hopefully at prisoner and patient, till at last they bring themselves to walk down the line of marble slabs and uncover the face of one after another of the sheeted figures in the morgue. The police captains will also tell you that the agony of those searchers who find at last

the thing they seek is often less than the suffering of those who are unsuccessful; who must continue to rise up in the morning and lie down at night in the awful shadow of uncertainty.

For many of those recorded as "still missing" there will be no home-coming. The tide has carried them out, and the merciful sea has wrapped its mystery about them. But for those who still live—who remain hidden because of shame or lack of success, or some fancied wrong or unhappiness in the home they left—how great is the responsibility! Who shall absolve them if they do not say, "I will arise and go to my father!"—"The Youth's Companion."

III A BLESSING

Whom God Uses to be the Greatest Blessing. Suppose we had been writing the twenty-third Psalm. Would we not have said, My cup is about half full? I remember D. L. Moody once saying that he never knew a child of God who was half full to be used. It is only when the cup runs over that the people around us get the benefit and the blessing.

I met a lady, some years ago, after a service in the Moody Church in Chicago, who seemed to be the most uninterested person in the audience. I went straight to her and said, "Are you saved?"

"O, Mr. Inglis, I keep that to myself!"

I said, "Do you know why you keep it to yourself?"

She replied, "No."

"Well, it is because you have got so little of it. It takes about half your life to find that you have any religion at all, and the other half of your life to hold on to it. You have nothing for anybody else." My cup must run over.—Charles Inglis, in an Address at Northfield.

Being Blessed, You Should be a Blessing.

God has dipped deep thy cup into his spring,

Which drippeth over, it is so well filled;

Lend it to some parched life, and let it bring

Laughter and song to voices drought has stilled.

God gave thee his only well-beloved Christ,

Whose steps have smoothed the road that leads thee home;

Tell those whose road is tough, whose way is missed,

That he has called all weary ones to come.

—Unknown.

The Joy of Being Blessed and of Being a Blessing. In "Souls in Action," Mr. Harold Begbie describes the joyous life of one who once was on the verge of self-destruction from melancholy and madness. In the happiness of her soul he finds the compelling proof of the miracle wrought by her faith in Christ. Here are her words: "I feel sometimes almost overwhelmed by my consciousness of God's blessing. That he should have saved me is mercy enough, and that he should have given me work to do for him is blessing enough; but that he should have given me the love of children, and placed it in my hand to prepare these children for his kingdom—this overwhelms me. You can understand how deeply I love my Savior and how it is, when I am quite alone after the day's work, I often find my eyes full of tears and my heart almost breaking with gratitude."

A Morning Prayer.

Let me today do something that shall take

A little sadness from the world's vast store,

And may I be so favored as to make

Of joy's too scanty sum a little more.

Let me not hurt, by any selfish deed

Or thoughtless word, the heart of foe or friend;

Nor would I pass, unseeing, worthy need,

Or sin by silence where I should defend.

However meager be my worldly wealth,

Let me give something that shall aid my kind,

A word of courage, or a thought of health,

Dropped as I pass for troubled hearts to find.

Let me tonight look back across the span
"Twixt dawn and dark, and to my conscience say—
Because of some good act to beast or man—
"The world is better that I lived today."

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 25. When the Good Shepherd has charge of his flock, the wild beasts will cease out of the land, all beastly passions shall be destroyed.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Verse 30. In that precious assurance every other treasure is found! Only be sure of that, and we will walk about as kings and queens!—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Surely everybody is included in this redemptive purpose of the Lord! He is looking for everybody, for everybody finds a place in his holy quest. He is seeking the "lost" sheep, the one that has wandered away, and now no longer hears the sound of the Shepherd's voice! The one that is carelessly nibbling the herbage on the very edge of perdition! He is looking for this one. Is he therefore looking for thee and me?

He is seeking "that which was driven away." Some hireling, some enemy of the shepherd, drove it far away from the fold. And the Lord's sheep are driven away by "principalities and powers," and by the violence of wicked men. Some impure and unworthy professor of religion can drive a whole household from the fellowship of the Church. And the Good Shepherd is seeking these. Is he therefore looking for thee or me?

And he is seeking "that which was sick." And some of the Lord's sheep are sickly. The chill of disappointment, or failure, or bereavement has blown upon them, and they are "down." Or they have been feeding on illicit pleasure. And the Lord is seeking such. Is he therefore seeking thee or me?—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Shepherd and his sheep. See the First and Second Topics.
2. The Book of Ezekiel.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who was Daniel? (*Guide*, p. 39.) 2. In whose reign and by whom was he taken to Babylon according to Dan 1.1? 3. What were the Jewish names of Daniel's friends, and what new names were given to all four? (Dan. 1.6, 7.) 4. How would the king's dainties "defile" Daniel? (Lev. 11; Dt. 12.23, 25; 1 Cor. 10.20.) 5. What was "pulse"? (*Guide*, p. 331.) 6. What does Professor Driver say about the magicians and enchanters of Babylon? (*Guide*, p. 332.) 7. Find out what you can about the effects upon the body and mind of gluttony. Of alcoholic drinks.

Questions to Think About. 1. How did Daniel show that he feared God more than an earthly king? 2. How did his rejection of the king's food and drink prove his loyalty to God? (*Guide*, p. 331.) 3. Are comforts and prosperity helps or hindrances to a godly life? 4. What does "purposed in his heart" mean? 5. Did Daniel's water and plain fare have anything to do with his clear thinking? 6. What other Old Testament heroes, strangers in a strange land, excelled the people of that land in their wisdom? (Joseph, Moses.) 7. Did it pay Daniel to be loyal to his principles? 8. Does it pay now to be a Daniel? 9. We hear much these days about business efficiency; what effect will the demand for this have upon the liquor traffic? 10. How does total abstinence benefit the body? 11. How does it benefit the mind?

Questions upon the Book of Daniel. 1. Who was the prophet Daniel? 2. Who wrote the book of Daniel? 3. What views are held in regard to the book and its date? 4. What historical questions have proved troublesome in regard to the book, and how have they been solved? (For answers, see pp. 39 and 40 of our Introduction.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the stanza on p. 335 or on p. 336.

In your Note-Book write "X: Ezekiel's Words about Jehovah as Shepherd."

THE BENEFITS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Golden Text

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank. Daniel 1.8.

LESSON Daniel 1: verses 8-20 printed MEMORIZE verses 19 20

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king. 11 Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. 16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

17 Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 And at the end of the days which the king had appointed for bringing them in, the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. A Heroic Resolve, 8.
- II. A Wise Plan, 9-13.
- III. The Success of the Experiment, 14-16.
- IV. Plain Living and High Thinking, 17-21.

1-7. Nebuchadnezzar directed one of his officers (the prince of the eunuchs) to take the Jewish youths of noble birth who were especially fair and bright, and have them enter what might be "accurately described as the Princes' College of Babylon." For three years they were to be taught the language and learning of the Chaldeans, and were to be nourished with a portion of the food and wine served the king himself. Among the youths selected were Daniel and three companions.

8. *Daniel purposed in his heart.* He firmly resolved. "A noble heart-purpose is the strongest watchman over external conduct. It is the purposeless life that has no defenses. A liner with engine power and helm and compass and destination can cut her way through the most tumultuous seas.

A liner destitute of helm and compass and errand is at the mercy of every fierce and unfriendly sea. Daniel had the mighty safeguard of 'a purpose true,' and when floods of unfriendly circumstance beset him he held firmly on his course" (Jowett).—*In his heart*. "A great many people purpose to do right, but the trouble with them is that they purpose in their heads, and that doesn't amount to much" (Moody).—*Would not defile himself with the king's dainties*. The king's dainties might have been offered in sacrifice to idols, or might not have been prepared according to Jewish laws, or might have been the flesh of animals held by the Jews to be unclean. See the law in Dt. 12.23, 24; Lev. 11.4-20. Daniel believed it a sacred duty to keep this rule, and therefore not to have kept it would have been for him a sin. "It is evil for that man who eateth with offense," said Paul. The principle at stake, too, was greater than the keeping of one law alone. The king had changed not only his food but his dress, his studies, his very name. Daniel meant "God is my Judge"; Belteshazzar, his new name, meant "May Beltis (a Babylonian goddess) defend the king." Everything was done to make Daniel and his companions forget their nationality and their religion. Had they yielded in the matter of eating meat sacrificed to idols, they would have been renouncing Jehovah their God for the false gods of Babylon.—*The wine which he drank*. Part of the king's wine might have been offered in sacrifice to idols. Compare Paul's solution of a similar difficulty, 1 Cor. 10.20, 27-29.—*The prince of the eunuchs*. Ashpenaz, verse 3.

9. Compare the similar case of Joseph, Gen. 29.21.

10. *The king who hath appointed your food and your drink*. Nebuchadnezzar, verse 5.—*See your faces worse looking*. Showing the effects of lack of nourishment.—*So would ye endanger my head with the king*. The king might think that Ashpenaz had enriched himself with what had been supplied for the Hebrew youths.

11. *The steward*. Heb. *Hammelzar*, RVm.—*Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah*. The king had changed their names for Babylonish ones—Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, verse 7. This changing of names and the instruction in the Babylonish learning were designed to make the youths forget their Hebrew nationality, and to make of them Babylonish governors of their own people.

12. *Prove*. Test. Daniel had a plan which he knew would not get the steward into trouble, for the test would prove, Dt. 8.3.—*Ten days*. A round number.—*Pulse*. Or, *herbs*, RVm. The word means any vegetable food—probably beans, peas and lentils.

14. *So he hearkened unto them*. Doubtless with many misgivings.

17. *God gave them knowledge*. They were industrious students, but the gift came none the less from God, as do all good things.—*Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams*. See Chapter 2.

18. *At the end of the days*. Three years, verse 5.—*Appointed*. Heb. *said*, RVm.

19. *Communed*. Talked. The king was now testing them.—*Therefore stood they before the king*. They were given positions which involved personal attendance upon the king. "When they stood in front of him, clean, straight, strong, unsullied, undaunted, unafraid, men who had their principles, and who had shown that they were willing to live and to die for them, he said at once, 'These are my men for whom I have been waiting.' Their fidelity brought them power, popularity, success. It brings that to most men, and it is what the world seeks" (Speer).

20. *He found them ten times better*. They had the sound mind that dwells in the sound body (*mens sana in corpore sano*). Simple living always results in clear thinking.

21. *Unto the first year of king Cyrus*. Cyrus king of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B. C., some sixty-six years after the third year of Jehoiakim, verse 1: the expression means that Daniel lived throughout the duration of the Chaldean Empire. According to Dan. 10.1, he was still living in the third year of Cyrus.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

8. *He would not defile himself with the king's dainties nor with the wine which he drank*. Athenæus, who lived about 200 A. D., calls the animals that were served at the tables of the Persian kings *victims*, because they were first offered as victims to their gods, and further says that the Persian kings (the

Persian Empire succeeded the Babylonian) were accustomed to order the food left at their own tables delivered to their courtiers. "The Jews, especially in later times, attached great importance to the dietary laws, and were also very scrupulous in avoiding acts which, even indirectly, might seem to imply the recognition of a heathen deity. Antiochus Epiphanes, in his endeavor (168 B.C.) to Hellenize the Jews, sought to compel them both to sacrifice to heathen deities and to partake of unclean food; and resistance to his edict was a point on which the utmost stress was laid by the royal Jews . . . Josephus speaks of certain priests who, being sent to Rome, partook on religious grounds of nothing but figs and nuts. For the abrogation of the principle, in the new dispensation, see Mk. 7:19; Acts 10:9-16."

In Jewish quarters on the door or window of a restaurant there is sometimes seen today the word *Kosher* in English or Hebrew letters, which means that all the food served there has been prepared according to the strict requirements of Deuteronomy.

20. *The magicians and enchanters in his realm.* Babylon was the land of magic; and a very extensive literature, dealing with different branches of the subject, has been brought to light during recent years. Demons, or evil spirits, were supposed to be active upon earth, bringing to mankind diseases, misfortunes and every kind of ill; the heavens were supposed to exercise an influence over the destinies of men and nations. Methods had to be devised for the purpose of dealing with the occult agencies concerned, of interpreting all significant phenomena, and of averting, where this was held to be possible, the evils which they portended. Sorcerers and sorceresses sprang up, who, by means of various magical devices, could invoke the demons at their will, and bring such persons as they chose within their power.—S. R. Driver, in "The Book of Daniel."



A Chaldean Diviner

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What king did Jehoiakim follow? What happened in his reign? Who was Nebuchadnezzar? When Peter was faced with the alternative of doing what the rulers said or of following his own conscience, what did he say? (A lesson of last year: Acts 5:27-29).

The Book of Daniel. See pages 38-41 of our Introduction.

Witnessing for God in the Land of the Exile. Professor Richard G. Moulton fittingly says: "The history of Israel is in the position of a river which runs for a time underground before it returns to view. There is no Bible narrative of the Exile: we know indirectly that the Captivity continues for some seventy years (from the earlier Captivity) without break; also, that in the interval the Babylonian conquerors are themselves conquered, and their dominions pass into the hands of the Medes and Persians. But the several stories of the Exiles cast their brilliant light upon successive points in the life of the Captivity. Nowhere is the charm of story greater than in the books of Daniel and of Esther. Through these impressive narratives we are able to see how even in their exile the chosen people continue to witness for their God among the nations."

How Daniel Came to Babylon. According to the first verses of our lesson, it was in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign (606 B.C.) that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first besieged Jerusalem and carried back with him to Babylon Jewish captives, together with some of the treasures of the Temple. Among the captives were Daniel and the three other youths of our lesson.

See "The Prophet Daniel," p. 39 of our Introduction.

For Babylon review the account on page 316.



Cameo of Nebuchadnezzar

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Daniel is thought to have been only fourteen years of age when he made his firm resolve. His self-mastery in youth was the keynote of his masterful life. Youth is the time to purpose in one's heart to be true to principle and loyal to God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is the title of our lesson? What does it mean? What are the names of the heroes of our lesson? How they proved the benefits of total abstinence is a very interesting story. Where were they?

For Older Pupils. Is it always right to do right? Is it always right to do what we think is right? Suppose others declare that we are mistaken in our sense of what is right; should we yield to what they advise when we cannot see the matter as they do? Is it right to do what we think is wrong under circumstances where we are persuaded we cannot help ourselves? Can a Christian in business say that a certain course is right, but he cannot follow it because all his competitors do the opposite? Is it ever necessary to sin? (After a discussion of Daniel's situation and the principle involved (see Topic I) and a talk about the way he gained his point, ask your pupils whether it would have been right for Daniel, instead of having the way which he thought was right proved, to have said to himself that he would try the way which he thought was wrong and see how it turned out.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I MORAL COURAGE

Daniel's Temptation and How He Overcame it. What made the king's meat so hard to resist? In the first place, Daniel was very young—at the very age when such a temptation is strongest. In the second place, he was away from home. Temptations are always strongest when away from home—out of sight of mother and playmates and the people who know you. In the third place, he might have said: "I am in Babylon; why not do as Babylon does? Why be peculiar?" No boy wants to be peculiar. "What's the use of being the only one in the crowd who refuses to drink?" "What's the use of making a scene?" Then he might have said, "I'll get my new friends in trouble." The young man at his first dinner party says something like that: "Why offend my hostess by refusing this wine when she has been so kind to me?" Then he might have said, "What harm is there in the meat and wine in itself?" And, finally, it was a matter of life and death with him—just as it is a matter of life and death with every boy when he is about to decide about that first drink.

How did he overcome? In the first place, he started at the beginning. He stopped before he began. He did not indulge a few days with the intention of stopping as soon as it could be done without a scene. In the second place, he purposed in his heart. He said, Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I will not touch it. Not many boys start out that way. "I expect to be a temperance man, of course; but as to never taking a glass of wine, I don't care to make any rash promises." Such a boy's purpose to be a temperance man is not of the sink or swim variety. In the third place, he went to work to carry his purpose into effect. He made arrangements to keep the temptation out of his way. And last, but not least, God helped him—as God helps every young man who starts in life with the right purpose in his heart.—Edward Leigh Pell, in "Secrets of Successful Sunday School Teaching."

The Moral Courage of an American Citizen. Mr. Hamilton Fish, the distinguished statesman, was noted for his courteous and modest bearing, and also for the firmness of his devotion to principle. A story told in the "New York Christian Advocate" illustrates all these noble characteristics. During his official life in Washington at a dinner given by him in honor of an eminent guest, one of those present was a United States Senator, formerly a Christian man, who had become almost irreligious. He enjoyed telling stories in a rather boisterous way, with irreverent references to Christianity. In illustrating a point he wished to make he told one of these stories.

Mr. Fish listened with an expression of astonishment and disapproval that ought to have had its influence. On the other hand, it seemed to incite the senator to still further discourtesy. Mr. Fish at length said quietly: "Sen-

ator ———, pardon me, but I must request you to desist. I firmly believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. Of his church I am a member; in my house I have tried to honor him, and in his faith I expect to die; and it is painful to me to hear you speak in this way." His manner was so courteous that it was impossible to take offense, and there were no more vulgar jokes or anecdotes derogatory to religion at the secretary's table.

A Publisher's Answer to a Brewers' Association. Your offer looks very good to us as to the size of the order and the revenue it would bring, but as I feel that some poor, innocent persons would have to pay not only the \$450 it would bring me, but also the cost of the beer sold and the profit on it, I am not warranted in accepting, much as I need the money.

My home has been broken up for more than a year, due to the fact that my wife has been placed in a hospital for the insane. The physician's diagnosis of her case is paranoia, which, the medical books say, is caused by a family taint of drunkenness, neurosis, or actual insanity. As there has been nothing like the latter two in the family history, I am led to believe that rum is the sole cause of the trouble, and now I, an innocent victim, must pay the hospital bills, conduct a wifeless home and raise a motherless daughter. My wife did not drink, but I am told that her father and her grandfather did.

I am not a temperance crank, but I could tell you more. This is sufficient, however, to satisfy you why I do not care to do anything to foster an appetite for beer or whisky. This is the largest advertising proposition I ever had presented to me, but it is not the only one I have refused. If you have any propositions, large or small, to advertise legitimate commodities that will serve a useful purpose in life, I shall be glad to consider them.

Moral Cowardice. A teacher said the other day that ninety boys out of every hundred who fail in grammar schools and high schools smoke tobacco. He says also that boys who smoke are nearly all unruly and disobedient in school. And he says again, that boys who get their lessons well and stand high in grammar schools take lower marks in high school if they begin to smoke in high school. This ought to be enough to make any boy stop and think before he begins to smoke, for it shows that it not only hurts a boy's mind, but his morals also.

I think the reason most boys take up smoking is not because they like it, but because their schoolmates do it, and they want to be one of "the crowd." When you boil that down it means either that a boy wants to be smart, or else he has not courage enough to stand alone; that is, he is a coward.

You would not think much of a boy who was about to enter a race and, just before he entered it, hurt his foot on purpose, so that he could not run his best, would you? Well, that is just what every boy does who smokes; it hinders him in the race of life. You ought not to smoke before you are twenty-one years old, because your body is not strong enough to stand it. The safest way is not to smoke at all, but at least don't smoke until you get your growth.—Howard J. Chidly, in "Fifty-two Story Talks."

II DEFILING ONE'S SELF

Defiled by Tobacco. The tobacco habit is an unclean master. A clean mouth, sweet breath, untainted clothes, apartments free from the stale odor, are hard things for an habitual smoker to manage. This point needs no elaboration. But if a proof is wanted, I only ask a glance at the floor of the smokers' side of a ferry or the smoking car of a train, and a sniff of the atmosphere after a few minutes of the crowd's unrestrained enjoyment of the weed, and—what is quite as significant—a note of the contrast in appearance between the men who crowd these places and those who seek cleaner floors and purer air.

It is an unhealthy master. It corrupts the sense of taste, injures the stomach, deadens the sensibilities, causes cancers and heart troubles. I can count half a dozen personal friends at this moment who know, on physicians' authority, that further continuance of smoking means shortened days, perhaps sudden death. Only one or two, however, have been strong enough to give it up.

It is an almost immoral master. Not in itself a necessary evil, it nevertheless promotes certain associations and leads in certain directions as to

other habits which are unhealthy to the moral nature. Do you know a liquor soaker who is not fond of tobacco? Did you ever see a barroom or prize-fighting or gambling crowd or rough gang of any kind that was not smoking and chewing? To paraphrase a famous remark of Horace Greeley, "All tobacco users are not horse thieves, but all horse thieves are tobacco users." A lad who has learned to handle a cigar with grace has made a first-class start on a road that has more than one bad stopping place. If you think that is not so, let me ask you whether, if you were an employer and wanted a young man for a position of trust and growth you would select the one with a cigar in his mouth, or the one who had decided not to use it.—Archer Brown, in "Top or Bottom."

Defiled by Dainties. Ask any physician whether as many sicknesses and deaths do not come from over-eating, or unwise eating, as from the drinking of wine and other liquors. Gluttony does not harm others besides the one who indulges therein, as does intemperance, but its harmfulness is seldom rightly appreciated.

What about the constant eating of sweets by children? Is there some truth in the argument put forth by a correspondent of "The London Times" that such eating has an effect on character, that the habit fosters that attitude of mind which leads the individual habitually to satisfy a craving as soon as it is felt, and develops into the habit of drinking and of looking forward to some fresh opportunity of self-indulgence as the principal object of life?

Defiled by Other Dissipations. I think sometimes that our common definition of dissipation is far too narrow. We confine it to crude excesses in the use of intoxicating liquor or the crude gratification of the passions: but often these are only the outward symbols of a more subtle inward disorder. The things of the world—a thousand clamoring interests, desires, possessions,—have got the better of us. Men become drunken with the inordinate desire for owning things, and dissolute with ambition for political office. I knew a man once, a farmer, esteemed an upright man in our community, who debauched himself upon land; fed his appetite upon the happiness of his home, cheated his children of education, and himself went shabby, bookless, joyless, comfortless, that he might buy more land. I call that dissipation, too!—David Grayson, in "Hempfield."

III THE BENEFITS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE

The Failure of "Prohibition in Spots." The policy of prohibition has failed to achieve among us in the past an adequate success, because wherever tried it has been only prohibition in spots! But sanitation in spots—vaccination, quarantine, sewerage, pure water-supply only here and there—such an arrangement would not give us a satisfactory improvement in public health. Nothing will do but a policy of public hygiene that is nation-wide. Just so with prohibition; a necessity of public health, moral and physical. The liquor power can only be struck at its vital center when hit by a national law. That blow given, and then scores of minor evils caused by drink will disappear that cannot otherwise be reached.—"The Congregationalist."

The Result of a Temperate Life. The man who avoids alcohol lives several years longer, on the average, than the moderate drinker, and has less illness meanwhile. He gets a long life, and a merry one to boot.—Dr. C. W. Saleeby.

Though I look old yet I am strong and lusty,
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty but kindly.

—"As You Like It."

Strict Habits of Life Pay. Suppose it should be discovered that the Brooklyn Bridge would bear only one pound weight more than is to be put upon it today. The bridge would still be perfectly safe, but the instant this discovery was made the bridge would be shut up at each end. All traffic would be instantly stopped. Why? The bridge is safe. Yes, but the margin is too narrow. There is no preparation for emergency, for unforeseeable strain.

This is the way men act for the protection of human bodies. Shall they be less careful, more reckless, blind to essential principles of life, in their care for greater things? Does not the soul need its margin of safety as well as the body?

The man is most dependable who in all things in life stays away from all debatable boundaries and puts a surplus of cleanliness and abstention on his life. It is the man with the margin of whom you know where he is and how much of him is there.

"In proportion to excellence," said Thring, "compromise is impossible. A single leak sinks a great ship; a raft that is all leaks floats." A bad man can still get along in his class with a margin so narrow that it would be fatal to the good man in his class. Why? Because men expect a wider margin of the good man. He must stay farther away from evil. Compromise is bad for any man; the better the man the worse it is. To the Christian character it is intolerable.

Strict Nazirite principles give a man a fuller mastery over his own soul. While he is seeking to be clean he may as well be clear-out clean. The Nazirite principles give him all his energy for creative work and the serious business of living a life. They prepare him for the unforeseen emergencies of sudden and unexpected strain. They save him from the shame of softness, and make him one of the company of the hardy souls who know what duty is, and who like to set their tough moral thews and sinews to the task of it. They make it easier for a man to think straight about moral issues. A sloppy, indulgent life is pretty sure to blur over the lines of moral cleavage which a man ought to see keen and sharp. As a matter of fact, the Nazirites have done more than their share of the stiff, reconstructive work that has been made only the heavier in each generation by the easy-goers, the ethical moderates, the men who don't know any cause worth a sacrifice that cuts through the skin.—Condensed from an Editorial in "The Sunday School Times."

David Starr Jordan's Appeal to Boys. So live that you yourself—the man you ought to be—may in his time be possible and actual. Far away in the twenties, the thirties of the twentieth century, he is waiting his turn. His body, his brain, his soul are in your boyish hands. He cannot help himself. What will you leave for him? Will it be a brain unspoiled by lust or dissipation, a mind trained to think and act, a nervous system true as a dial in its response to the truth about you? Will you, boy of the twentieth century, let him come as a man among men in his time, or will you throw away his inheritance before he has had a chance to touch it? Will you let him come, taking your place, gaining through your experience, hallowed through your joys, building on them his own, or will you fling his hope away, decreeing, wanton-like, that the man you might have been shall never be?

The Coming Man.

Strong of body, strong of soul,
Firm of purpose to control,
He will spurn the tempting bowl,
In the shadow of the vine.
No taint of wine in his full brain,
No trembling hand will hold the rein,
When he who rules shall drink no wine.

—George Bungay.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 8. The solemn purpose in our heart to maintain temperance and purity will render us invincible.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Verse 8. Whatever people may think of you, do that which you think to be right.—Pythagoras.

Verse 8. The chief baker can minister to self-indulgence as well as the chief butler.

Verse 8. Far from me be the gift of Bacchus—pernicious, inflaming wine, that weakens both body and mind.—Homer.

Verse 12.

"There's a drink that never harms,
There's a drink that never alarms;
'Tis pure cold water."

Verse 19. Bodily enjoyment depends upon health, and health upon temperance.—Thales.

Verse 20. "Drinking makes thinking impossible; some day thinking will make drinking impossible."

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Are we going to be trimmers, compromisers, evaders, men who conceal our deepest life, our truest convictions, whom other men can frown down, or laugh out of our loyalties? Are we going to be like that, or are we going to stand by our convictions through life and down to the very gate of death itself like this little quartette hundreds of years ago?

Some of us can remember how Mr. Moody often had us sing:

Dare to be a Daniel!
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose true!
Dare to make it known!

Well, dare we? Or is the devil going to dare and double-dare us out of it tomorrow? Maybe some girl will laugh us out of it within a fortnight; maybe some men will be able to taunt us out of our fidelity to the deepest and best we ever knew. O men, dare we anything else than to see with clear, unblinking eyes the right of God and our duty to the men about us, and to cleave to that right and to that duty by day and night until the end?

And yet there is one deeper, final word than this. We must get back of all mere deliberate choice of principles, and high resolutions, and dare to do the right thing, to live the truth and to walk in cleanness, honor and love; we must go back of all these willings and resolvings of our own lives to something deeper, richer, and more penetrating and powerful, even to the indwelling of our lives by One who is stronger than we, who is the Assurance of the inevitable victory.—Dr. Robert E. Speer.

"No!" he said, and none then knew the sacrifice it meant,
Nor how the soul to greatness grew through this relinquishment.

—Harold S. Seymour.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The growth of temperance sentiment. See "Prohibition in the United States and Russia," "The Outlook," 1916, p. 119.
2. Alcohol and efficiency. See "The Outlook," Oct. 13, 1915, p. 350; "Habits that Handicap," "New Republic," Jan. 15, 1916; "No Booze for Big Business," "Literary Digest," March 4, 1916.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Tell Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the failure of the magicians to answer it, and Daniel's interpretation. (Chapter 2.) 2. How did it happen that the three Jews were "appointed over the affairs of the province"? (2.48, 49.) 3. Read the entire third chapter. 4. What were the Hebrew names of these men, and why were they changed? (Dan. 1.6, 7; *Guide*, p. 339.) 5. Describe the great image. 6. Where was the image erected? 7. Describe the furnace. (*Guide*, p. 339.) 8. What words of Job have the same thought as those of the three Friends in verse 18? (Job 13.15.) 9. What does Ps. 34.7 say about help in trouble?

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Nebuchadnezzar have the great image erected? 2. Why could not the Jews obey the king's command in regard to it? 3. What reasons might these three men have given for bowing down before the image? (*Guide*, p. 342.) 4. Why did the Chaldeans bring accusation against them? 5. What did the king mean by asking "Is it of purpose," verse 14? 6. What did the Jews mean by their answer in verse 16? 7. Where was Daniel all this time? 8. Does God always save from death those who serve him? 9. What does our Golden Text mean? 10. What are the lessons of this story? 11. Recall the story of William Tell and compare it with this story.

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the stanza on p. 343. Write "XI: Daniel and Three Friends at the Court of Nebuchadnezzar,"

THE FIERY FURNACE

Golden Text

When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
Isaiah 43:2

LESSON Daniel 3: verses 16-27 printed MEMORIZE verses 17, 18

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded certain mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their breeches, their tunics, and their mantles, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished and rose up in haste: he spake and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace: he spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came forth out of the midst of the fire. 27 And the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, that the fire had no power upon their bodies, nor was the hair of their head singed, neither were their breeches changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. A Colossal Image, 1-7.
- II. A Jealous Accusation, 8-12.
- III. Heroic Fidelity, 13-18.
- IV. The Fiery Furnace, 19-23.
- V. The Marvelous Deliverance, 24-27.
- VI. A Change of Heart, 28-30.

14-15. *Is it of purpose.* Read the first thirteen verses of this chapter. The king gives the three Jews a chance to explain their attitude. Compare our expression "Was it with malice of forethought?"—*Well.* This word is not in the original; the construction is called in rhetoric aposiopesis—a figure of speech in which the speaker breaks off suddenly.—*A burning fiery furnace.* Jeremiah (29:22) speaks of those "whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire."

16. *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.* Their Hebrew names were a witness not only to their nationality, but to their religion. Hananiah means

"Jehovah is gracious"; Mishaël (perhaps), "Who is equal to God?"; Azariah, "God is a helper." "It is hardly likely that the Chaldeans would have tolerated the use of such names among their young pupils, since every repetition of them would have sounded like a challenge to the supremacy of Bel, Merodach, and Nebo. It was a common thing to change names in heathen courts, as the name of Joseph had been changed by the Egyptians to Zaphnath-paaneah (Gen. 41.45) and the Assyrians changed the name of Psammetichus II into 'Nebro-seriv-ani,' 'Nebo save me.' They therefore made the names of the boys echo the names of the Babylonian deities. Hananiah was called Shadrach, perhaps, Shudur-aku, 'Command of Aku,' the moon-deity; Mishaël was called Meshach, a name which we cannot interpret; and Azariah, instead of 'God is helper,' was called Abed-nego, a mistaken form for Abed-nebo, or 'Servant of Nebo'" (Farrar). They had been appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon, 2.49, and it was the jealous Chaldeans under them who reported to the king their refusal to worship the golden image, 3.8-12.—*We have no need. We are not careful, RVm.—To answer thee in this matter.* To answer his question of "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" They imply that the king already knew the power of their God.

17. *If it be so. Or, behold, our God, etc. Or, If our God whom we serve be able to deliver us he will deliver us from . . . and out of thy hand, O king, RVm.* Dr. Prince suggests a better translation: "If our God whom we serve exists, he is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and from thy hand, O king, he will deliver us. This is a defiant expression of the Hebrew's perfect faith in the power of their God which they make dependent on what is to them a certainty, e. g., his very existence."

18. *But if not.* In any case, even if he does not intervene to save us.—*We will not serve thy gods.* "Nebuchadnezzar's logic was only 'Do as I bid you, or burn,' and the sole possible reply was, 'We will not do as you bid, and we will burn'" (Maclaren). Compare Job's words, "Though he slay me, yet I will trust him." We know that during the captivity in Babylon the Jews were allowed all freedom of worship, while in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes the Jews who remained steadfast in their allegiance to God were treated with the greatest cruelty. These facts favor the view that the book of Daniel was written at the later time. See p. 40 of our Introduction.

19. *His visage was changed.* His features were distorted with rage.—*Seven times more.* To the utmost intensity of heat.

21. *Breeches, tunics, maniles, and other garments.* "Wide trousers, fine linen shirts, precious garments, and robes of state." In the Authorized Version instead of *maniles* the word *hats* is given, and from this, it is said, George Fox the Quaker deduced his idea that men should remain covered in the presence of royalty.

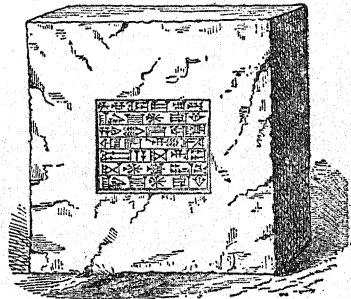
22. *Took up.* To the opening on top of the mound. See below.

24. *Rose up.* He had been seated where he could see his commands carried out.

25. *Loose. Unbound.—A son of the gods.* An appropriate comparison for a heathen king.

26. *Mouth.* Aramaic, *door, RVm.*

27. *The satrap . . . counselors.* Verses 2 and 3.—*The fire had no power over their bodies.—Changed. Damaged.*



A Brick on which the Name Nebuchadnezzar is Stamped

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

17. *The burning, fiery furnace.* This was probably a pit in the ground, lined with stones or bricks, covered by a low mound with a vent on top, into which the men were thrown, with a grated gate on one side, through which

the king could see the interior of the furnace. Burning alive, which has been in use as a punishment until quite a recent date in Persia, was one of the favorite methods of torture practised on the Jews during the Seleucid period.—Prince.

19. *Heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated.* The most savagely barbarous and therefore the most accomplished inquisitors were those of Portugal, who had a peculiar machinery for prolonging the fiery torment, and they usually kept their victims alive under their hands for an hour and a half or two hours. In other countries, too, the inquisitors of the Church of Rome have roasted heretics to death by slow fires, or they have half burnt and half smothered them by a lingering process with green wood. Often, when the burning was checked by design or accident, the martyrs implored the executioners to give more fire, which the bystanders, in pity, would hasten to supply. When burnings have been despatched quickly the inquisitors have taken credit for humanity; and I remember to have read of one advocate of the holy office claiming merit for quick despatch, and assuring an objector that any criminal who had liberty to choose would prefer to die as he died, by a very hot fire, where the heretic gave one heavy gasp, and all was over.—Wm. Harris Rule, in "Daniel the Prophet."

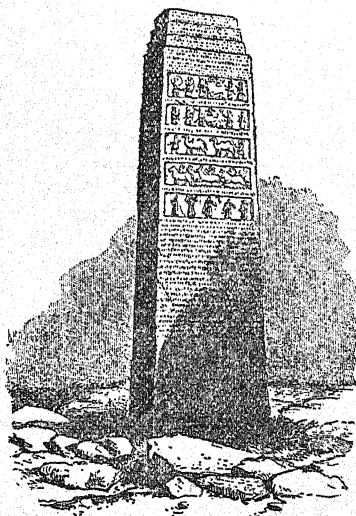
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. 1. When did Peter and John boldly withstand rulers? 2. When did Paul? 3. What did Paul tell the Philippians about bowing the knee? 4. What is said in Romans about all things working together for good, and what do the words mean? (These questions all refer to lessons of last year.) 5. Under what kings had the people of Judah been gross idolaters? 6. What were the names of the four youths who refused to eat the king's dainties and wines?

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream. It came to pass that the king dreamed one night, but when morning came the dream had escaped him. It greatly troubled him, and he sent for all the wise men of his kingdom to come and tell him what the dream was and what it meant. The sorcerers and magicians and enchanters promised to give the dream's interpretation, but they could not tell the dream, and the king in his anger ordered all the wise men of the

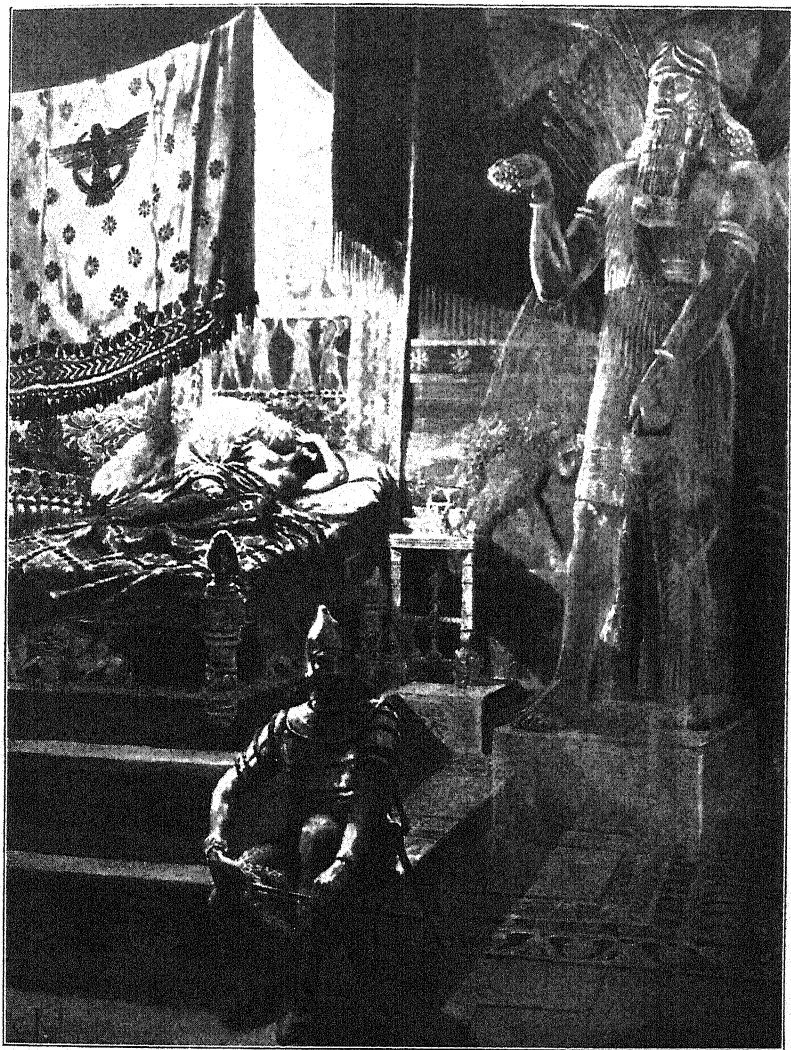
realm put to death. Among the wise men Daniel and his companions were reckoned. In a vision the king's dream was made known to Daniel, and he told it to the king together with the interpretation. Whereupon Nebuchadnezzar made him governor over the whole province of Babylon, and made his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego his assistants.

Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image. In the province of Babylon, on the Plain of Dura, Nebuchadnezzar had a magnificent golden image set up and summoned all the officials of his realm to its dedication. He could not forget the image seen in his dream, evidently, and his golden image may have seemed to him like himself: on the Black Obelisk Shalmaneser says, "I made an image of my royalty." A herald proclaimed the king's decree that when the instruments of music were sounded, every one must fall down and worship the idol; whoever did not would at once be cast into a fiery furnace. Among his officials were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. For these men not to bow down to the golden image

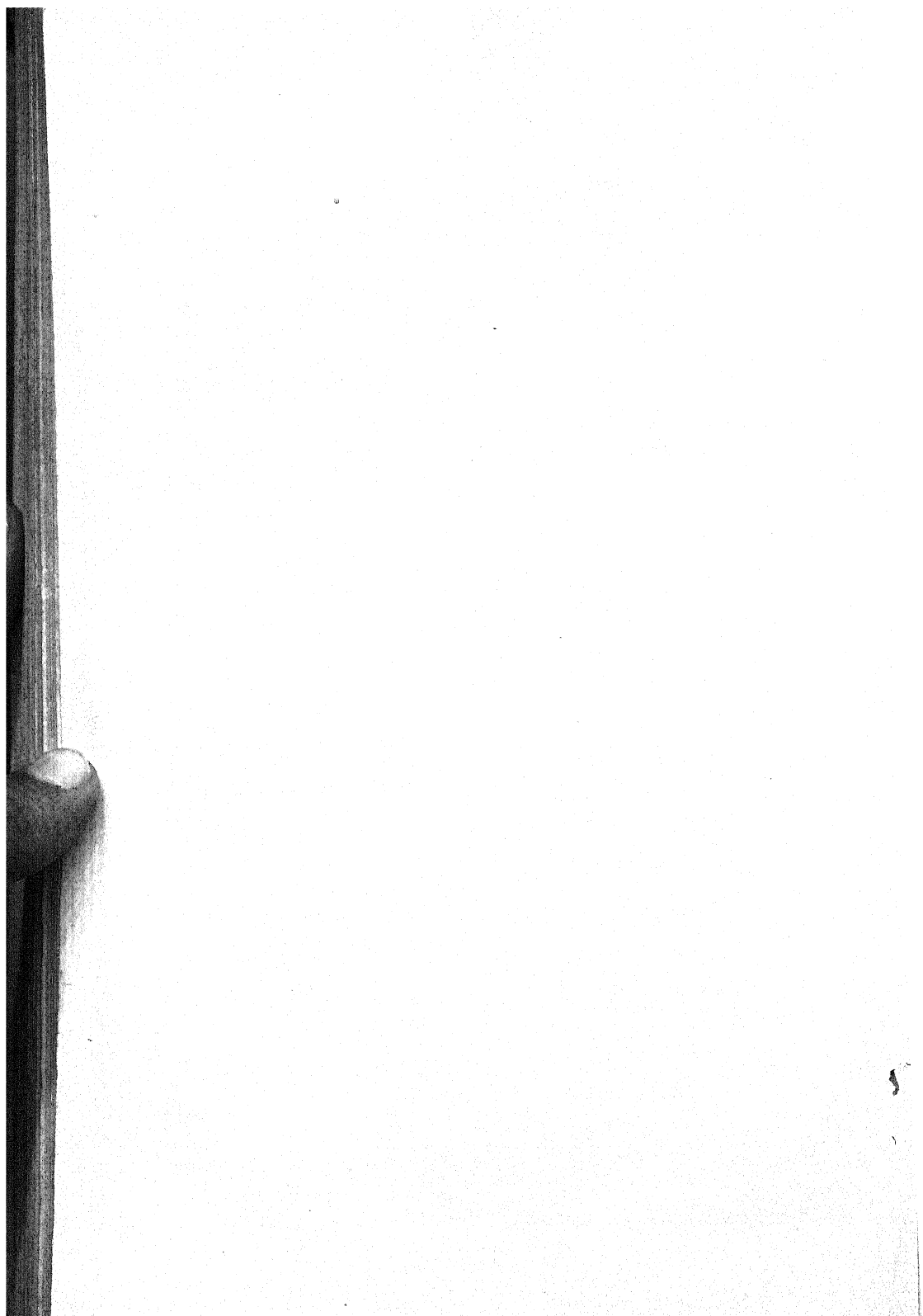


Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser

meant not only a refusal to worship as the king commanded, but a defiance of the king himself; for he and his god were practically one and the same, and the order was a political move to test the allegiance of the officials to their



KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM
From a Drawing by G. Rochegrosse



monarch. On the other hand, for them to bow down to the image would be to be untrue to God, to break one of his commandments. "Here were they who formerly resolved not to defile themselves with the king's meat, and now they as bravely resolve not to defile themselves with his god," observes Matthew Henry. The jealous Chaldeans made known to the king the refusal of the three Hebrews to obey his command.

Where was Daniel Meanwhile? Why was he not among the rest at the great gathering on the Plain of Dura? Was he ill, or absent on business of state, or was he present and his failure to bow before the image not revealed to the king because of his high position? In a story written for didactic purposes it would not be necessary to account for Daniel at this time.

The Book of Daniel and the Purpose of This Lesson Story. One cannot understand this or any other of the stories of the Book of Daniel without understanding the purpose of the Book as a whole. See pp. 39-41 of our Introduction. This special story shows how men have been so loyal to God that they would rather suffer martyrdom than deny him.

The Time and Place of the Story. Near the mounds that mark the site of Babylon there is today a plain called Duair, a corruption of Dura. The time is in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, 604-561 B. C.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Did it all really happen?" "Could the three men actually walk about unharmed in a fiery furnace?" Teachers of older pupils will be asked these and similar questions. What answer shall you make? The answer which you believe. But you cannot rightly know what to believe if you have not carefully read the Book of Daniel as a whole and have not studied the purpose for which it was written. There are many students of the Bible who regard the events narrated in the first six chapters as literal facts: there are many other students of the Bible who think the stories were written to enforce certain truths, and that in the stories fact and tradition are blended. See our Introduction. All teachers should give as little attention as possible to the wonder of the story, for it is of minor importance compared with the great lesson which the story teaches. It is "of priceless value as illustrating the nobility of undaunted faithfulness, as setting forth the truth that they who love God and trust in him must love him and trust in him even until the end, in spite not only of the most overwhelming peril, but even when they are brought face to face with apparently hopeless defeat."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the battle of Aboukir Bay, a French naval officer and his son perished with his ship. Mrs. Hemans has told the story in a poem which I am sure you must know. It begins:

The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence all but him had fled.

Who can tell the story of Casabianca? "Whatever happens I will do as my father bade me," was the boy's determination. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," said Job. Who was it that resolved, "Come what may, we will not bow down and worship idols"? All of these, Casabianca, Job, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had the courage of their convictions. What does this expression mean? These noble Hebrew youths did not perish by fire as did Casabianca, but they were equally willing to suffer such a death rather than do what their consciences told them would be wrong. Who had given them these strange names? What did they mean? What were their Hebrew names? What did these mean?

For Older Pupils. In Schiller's "William Tell," you remember, Gessler, the Austrian governor, has the ducal hat of Austria suspended on a pole in the market-place at Altorf and issues the command that every one who passes must bow to it. Two men are stationed near by and ordered to put in prison any one who fails to pay the toll of reverence. Tell passes with his little son and does not salute the hat. He is seized by the guard and is being hurried off to prison in the midst of an uproar from the people, when Gessler himself appears upon the scene. The matter is explained and Gessler says to Tell, "Do you so despise your emperor, Tell, and me, who govern here in his stead, that you

refuse honor to the hat which I have hung up as a test of obedience?" He dooms Tell to death unless he can shoot an apple from the head of his son at a distance of a hundred paces. Tell does this, and reveals another arrow with which he had intended to shoot Gessler if he had killed his son. He is taken across Lake Lucerne by Gessler to Küssnacht Castle to be eaten alive by reptiles—perhaps you have had the very chapel, now called Tell's Chapel, pointed out to you on Lake Lucerne—but a storm comes up, Tell shoots the governor, makes his escape, and afterwards frees his country.

So vivid is the drama that it is hard to realize that Tell is only a legendary hero in the struggle for independence of the Swiss cantons with Albrecht of Austria, that there was no real Wilhelm Tell.

Of course, as I have been telling the story you have been comparing it with our lesson story. Instead of the market-place at Altorf we have the Plain of Dura; instead of the cap on a pole, the image of gold; instead of Gessler and Tell, Nebuchadnezzar and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; instead of Gessler's guards, certain Chaldeans: instead of the ordeal with the arrows, the ordeal of the furnace.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I TESTED FAITH

The Testing of the Faithful Three. Mr. C. E. Morgan imagines some friendly courtier with the best of intentions endeavoring to turn these three Hebrews from their purpose. He supposes that the courtier uses the argument of position, and says: "You are not merely subjects, but rulers. If you disobey the royal command, it will tend to anarchy and rebellion throughout the land: for when rulers are disloyal, how shall the people yield obedience?" But the men are under a Higher Authority than that of an earthly king, and he has said, "Thou shalt not bow down to any graven image."

Next he uses the argument of obligation, and reasons: "Think how indebted you are to his Majesty. But for his generous treatment, you would have perished ere now. But he has fed you and clothed you and raised you to a high estate. Thus he has put you under obligations which you cannot in justice ignore." This was true, but how much more were they indebted to the King of Heaven!

Still another argument the courtier uses, that of circumstance. "We know that you do not believe in idolatry, and that under ordinary circumstances you would not dream of bowing down to a graven image. But the circumstances now are so exceptional that no one would misunderstand you if, as a purely temporary measure, you broke your rule for once." But such a counsel of expediency, if adopted, could but end disastrously.

Failing in all his other arguments, the courtier advances the argument of place: "Granted, that in your land it would be wrong to worship any other than the God of your fathers; yet there are times when men must adapt themselves to their surroundings, and do in Babylon as Babylon does. Your God can hardly expect you to follow him unswervingly when the tide is set all the other way." But the time and place when others bow are just those when we are bound to stand. "Under the circumstances" of what God has done for us, it is surely only reasonable that we remain true to him!

Distance may seem to dwarf the majesty of God's law, but it still remains, for no reasoning can make wrong right. Mr. Morgan draws this suggestive parallel: We may take our place upon a Channel steamer, going from Dover to France. As we depart, the white cliffs of Britain tower straight and high above us. We reach the other side, and the cliffs of Dover are no longer seen. But have they ceased to exist? So it is in modern life. Its exigencies may remove us far from the early home where we prayed and read our Bible and learned our early lessons about the Heavenly Kingdom. We may have to worship among those who worship other gods, whose hearts are set on baser things. We must mix with men who mock at sin, and scoff at things Divine, to whom the Law of God is as an idle tale. Then we try to think that his Law exists no longer. But it is a hideous mistake to reason thus. The Rock of Ages stands unchanged. "The Word of the Lord abideth for ever." His law is still insistent in its claims, and some day, either here or hereafter, we must needs face it again.

The Testing of Perpetua and Felicitas. Famous among the early Christian martyrs were two women of Carthage, Perpetua, a well-born lady, and Felicitas, a slave. When her heathen father besought Perpetua to have pity on his gray hairs and on her only child and renounce her faith, her repeated answer was, "I am a Christian." Felicitas was very weak at the time of her arrest, but when asked how she could bear the worse tortures of the wild beasts, the fate awaiting her if she did not recant, she said bravely: "I bear now my own sufferings; then there will be One with me who will bear my sufferings for me because I shall suffer for his sake."

The Testing of Kossuth. When Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, was in exile in Turkey, Austria endeavored to compel Turkey to give him up. The Turks promised him protection if he would embrace Mohammedanism. This was his reply: "My answer does not admit of hesitation. Between death and shame the choice can neither be dubious nor difficult. Though once the governor of a generous people, I leave no inheritance to my people. They shall at least bear an unsullied name. God's will be done! I am prepared to die."

The Testing of a Chinese Admiral. Admiral Li Huo is a Chinese Christian admiral of our own day. As a Christian he declined to attend heathen sacrifices, and was excused by President Yuan Shih Kai. But when with others he was called upon to take an oath of allegiance to the new President of China, he refused to swear by heathen gods in a heathen temple, although he feared that he was thereby endangering his position and even his life. His refusal was brought to the notice of President Yuan, who investigated the matter and then dismissed the Admiral from his service. But several prominent Christians interceded for Li Huo and President Yuan agreed to reinstate him in office if he would take the oath of allegiance in some other place and way. So from the steps of the Temple of Heaven Admiral Li took the oath of allegiance, and sealed it with an earnest prayer to the true God whom he serves.

II WHEN THOU WALKEST THROUGH THE FIRE THOU SHALT NOT BE BURNED

The Flame Shall Not Kindle upon Thee. The God whom they served justified their bold speech. The fire forgot its power to burn, because of the youth whose "aspect was like a son of the gods." Nothing is more miraculous than the manner in which God renders his children impervious to the most terrible ordeals. Go to the workhouse and see how complete their triumph over ill-fortune. Visit the hospital for incurables and witness their victory over disease and pain. See the blind asylum, or that of the deaf and dumb, and what sublime resignation! Think of the horror of the battle-field, and the perfect peace of the soldiers of the Cross. The saint is the salamander. God has asbestos in which to wrap his tried ones against the fury of the furnace.

There is something about the righteous, something within them, a mystic charm, that will not suffer them to be really hurt. By virtue of a marvelous gift they become invulnerable in the day of battle. With only a spider's thread they bridge the raging river. In the hottest furnace they walk unburnt, as a moist hand plunged into white-hot metal remains unblistered. The spray of the wildest sea does not sprinkle them, the smell of the intensest furnace does not pass upon them. Who or what can hurt whom God designs to save?—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in "The Quiet Hour."

The Shadow of Thy Wing.

I have naught to fear:

This darkness is the shadow of thy wing;
Beneath it I am almost sacred—here
Can come no evil thing.

—Milton.

Special Providence. People talk about special providences. I believe in the providences, but not in the speciality. I do not believe that God lets the thread of my affairs go for six days, and on the seventh evening takes it up for a moment. The so-called providences are no exception to the rule—they are common to men at all moments. But it is a fact that God's care is more evident in some instances of it than in others, to the dim and often bewildered vision of humanity. Upon such instances men seize, and call them providences. It is well that they can; but it would be gloriously better if they could believe that the whole matter is one grand providence.—George Macdonald.

III But If Not

The Most Important Words of the Whole Narrative. The three fearless Hebrews were determined to do the right, whatever the result might be, whether they lived or died. God was able to deliver them, that they knew, but that it was his plan for them that their lives should now be spared they did not know. "But if not," they said, "be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods." God's will be done: in either case they would be true to him.

If He Does Not Deliver Us, Our Faith is Not at an End. In the days which lie ahead, with their perplexing experiences, remember that God's meanings of life are essentially larger than ours; and it will fill our hearts with peace, and put stability into our lives to be able to say: "*But if not*, Lord, I will trust thee."

This alternative to a disappointed faith tests the quality of the man who professes faith in God. I know a man who, being disappointed in his experience, began to pity himself, and, because God contradicted his expectations and longings, was staggered in his faith, and backsliding began. I know the man to whom disappointment becomes disbelief, the man who measures God in the tiny scales of his own self-consciousness. On the other hand, I know men who have learned to say courageously with these three Hebrews, "But if not."

There is a business man who has come to the determination to put the Kingdom of God first in his business, that all things else may be added to him; but he finds, not additions, but subtractions; he finds that his profits are not greater, but beautifully less each year. He finds the pathway of Christ is no sentimental thing to sing about—he discovers the cross is heavy, the way is narrow, and the oppositions are innumerable. Then the man of the "but if not" type will say: "I do not intend for a moment to desert my Lord, for I can never unsee what I have seen in him; I can never unlearn what I have learned from him; and I can never lose that which he has begun to work in me. Therefore, be the consequences of my fidelity what they may, I am going on with God."

But there is someone greater than all others. Listen for a moment, away yonder in the garden! "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; **BUT IF NOT**, thy will be done."

When your prayers, instead of being speedily answered, are delayed in answer, when you are still kept waiting for things which you thought God must do for you, God help you to say in some such words as these: "But if not, I will still follow thee."—Condensed from an Address by J. Stuart Holden.

Shall These Things Separate Us from the Love of Christ? A little band of Stundists (so called because they kept the *Stunde*, hour of prayer), came a few years ago to the half-arid region in western North Dakota. They were late in planting the first year, and their crops were small. The next year there was a drought. The third year a terrific hail-storm beat down the wheat and cut the corn into ribbons. The fourth year there was another drought.

Through all these tribulations, did they lose their faith in God's care? This was the testimony of one old man at their mid-week meeting: "Shall these things separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? What though for his sake we are killed all the day long? . . . In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

During these four hard summers their herds of swine had lived and increased; they were just ready for the market when cholera broke out among them and they began to die. The people did not know what was the matter, and the old man who had paraphrased the words of Paul sent his son to ask an American neighbor to come and look them over. The "Youth's Companion" gives the conversation:

"Look here, boys," said the neighbor. "You hustle down to the railway station, and have the agent wire for a car. We'll sort out those that haven't yet begun to show it, and ship them to Chicago. If you hurry, the agent can get you a car on the local this afternoon, and you can get them off to-night."

"You mean there are some that still are healthy?" asked the old man.

"They're all infected, every one of them. In a week you won't have a hog left on the place. But it takes two or three days after they begin to show the

first symptoms before they come down with the disease, and I think if we pick them carefully, we can cut out a carload that will pass."

The boy stood hesitating between the father and the neighbor. In a moment the old man spoke: "Shall we commit this great sin? Not so, for God knows, and he will not see us do wrong, nor yet will he forsake us in our need. No, my friend, if they must die, it is better they die here than in Chicago."

The neighbor returned to his own farm, and told the story to the other neighbors. "Those Stundists have got the real thing," he said.

A Much Needed Lesson. So many so-called Christian faiths have been shattered on experience inexplicable. Men have been giving up what they have been calling faith in God. I urge an unquestioning faith. Faith in God will come to places where there will be absolutely no reason for it, but just faith in God. We believe in and trust God because he is God, not because he saved us from a furnace, not because he made us rich, not because he healed our diseases. We are in danger today of a modern folly running about in the name of religion to find cures for aches and pains. I am suspicious of such selfishness calling itself faith. Who ever made my little pain-threatened body the clearing house of God's justification? But I am never suspicious of the man who can face the certain furnace of pain and say, Burned to a handful of ashes though my body may be, my faith in God is unshaken! Faith does not stand on what may or may not happen to me. It stands upon the fact of God.—Merton S. Rice.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 18. A brave man hazards life, but not his conscience.—Schiller.

Verse 25. No trials faced in obedience to God will be borne alone.—Dr. Maclaren.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire. There is always One extra. We sometimes think sadly and doubtfully of the fiery trials which are to try us, but to doubt is disloyalty. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.—W. L. Watkinson.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSIONS

1. The union of politics and religion. See "Freedom of Press vs. Freedom of Pulpit," "The Outlook," Dec. 2, 1914.
2. The Book of Daniel. See pages 39-41 of our Introduction.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the entire sixth chapter. 2. How long a time has elapsed since our lesson about Daniel of two weeks ago? (*Guide*, p. 348.) 3. What new kingdom was in power in Babylon? (*Guide*, p. 348.) 4. What was Daniel's position in this new kingdom? (Dan. 6.1, 2.) 5. What was the "writing," verse 10? 6. What is an "interdict"? What was the expressed motive for the request of the satraps? 8. What was their real motive? 9. Why did Daniel have his windows open toward Jerusalem? (*Guide*, p. 347.) 10. What does every Moslem mosque today contain that shows the direction in which Mecca lies, and why? (*Guide*, p. 347.) 11. Read Daniel's prayer in Dan. 9.4-19. 12. What was the king's conclusion in regard to Jehovah? 13. What illustration is given in the book of Esther of the law of the Medes and Persians? 14. With verse 20 compare Gen. 18.14. 15. What is said about Paul's being delivered from the mouth of a lion?

Questions to Think About. 1. When was Jesus asked to bow down and worship, and what was his answer? 2. Why did not Daniel pray with his lattices shut so no one could charge him with disloyalty to his king? 3. How often do you pray? 4. What do we mean when we say "It is a law of the Medes and Persians"? 5. What king in New Testament times kept a vow which he regretted and caused the death of an innocent man? (Mt. 14.9.) 6. What good traits do you find in Darius? What evil traits? 7. Does God deliver from danger every one that fears him? 8. What does our Golden Text mean?

Questions upon the Book of Daniel. 1. Into what two parts is the book divided? 2. What is the message of the book? 3. What are its lessons for today? (For answers, see pages 40 and 41 of our Introduction.)

Note-Book Work. Write "XII: Daniel and the Fiery Furnace."

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Golden Text

The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them
that fear him, And delivereth them. Psalm 34:7

LESSON, Daniel 6: verses 10-23 printed MEMORIZE verses 22, 23

10 And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem); and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11 Then these men assembled together, and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. 12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's interdict: Hast thou not signed an interdict, that every man that shall make petition unto any god or man within thirty days, save unto thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, who is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the interdict that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him. 15 Then these men assembled together unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that no interdict nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords; that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep fled from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came near unto the den to Daniel, he cried with a lamentable voice; the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23 Then was the king exceedingly glad, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Daniel's Promotion, 1-3.
- II. The Plot against Daniel, 4-8.
- III. Daniel's Steadfastness, 10-15.
- IV. Unharmed in the Den of Lions, 16-23.
- V. His Enemies Destroyed and God Honored, 24-28.

10. When Daniel knew that the writing was signed. Read 6:1-9.—His windows were open. The windows were probably covered with lattice-work as they still are in the East, and they could be opened and shut like doors: compare Judges 5:28; 2 K. 1:2, and 13:17.—In his chamber. Probably an upper room.—Toward Jerusalem. Compare Solomon's words about captives pray-



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN
From a Drawing by John Macallan Swan

ing unto God toward their land, 1 K. 8.48; I will worship toward thy holy temple, Ps. 5.7; I will look again toward thy holy temple, Jonah 2.4. Is there a survival of this in the eastern position in worship deemed important by some Christians today? "Praying toward a holy place is a reminder of that which makes that place holy, and if a worshiper can be in that place instead of merely praying toward it, he feels that the value of his prayers is manifolded" (Trumbull).—*Three times a day*. Probably the times mentioned in Ps. 55.17.—*Prayed and gave thanks before God as he did aforetime*. He continued his habit of prayer just as he did before the decree was issued. See p. 350.

11. *These men*. Verses 4-6.

12. *The king*. Darius, verse 9.—*Interdict*. A prohibitory order, a decree that forbids something.—*Hast thou not signed*. Compare their respectful words of address in verse 6, when they wanted the king to make the decree—"King Darius live for ever." Their abrupt address here, without the customary preliminary words (see also Daniel's address, verse 21), shows both their anger and their contempt of the king whom they could use for their own ends.—*Make petition unto any god or man save unto thee*. The crafty counselors had evidently secured from the king this edict because the regulation flattered his vanity, as though he were a god to whom the whole nation must pay divine honors for thirty days.—*The law of the Medes and Persians*. See p. 348.—*Altereth not*. Aramaic, passeth not away, RVm. See Esther 8.8.

13. *That Daniel*. The contemptuous words betray their jealousy.

14. *The king was sore displeased*. So was Herod, when Herodias' daughter demanded the head of John the Baptist. Herod had John the Baptist put to death from a false sense of duty, and for the same reason Darius ordered the death of Daniel.

15. *Know, O king*. He might labor to rescue Daniel, but he was powerless before his own law, they remind their tool. They had no such pity for his distress as had the Moorish government for Queen Isabella. When the Rock of Gibraltar was temporarily in possession of the Moors, Isabella took her seat outside the fortress declaring that she would not leave until the Spanish flag should float over the citadel. She would have perished there had she remained true to her vow, but the Moorish government kindly raised the Spanish flag for a moment so as to release her from her pledge.

16. *Thy God whom thou servest continually*. "'Thy God,' personal God; as if all thine; for so God treats each man, as if he were an only child, and lavishes his love upon him. 'Whom thou servest continually'; here is service, obedience, faithfulness, steadfastness, continuity, persistence, perseverance; a service without distraction, flaw, hesitation; a concentrated worship" (Joseph Parker).

17. *Signet*. See p. 348.—*That nothing might be changed*. Or, *that there might be no change of purpose*, RVm.

18. *Passed the night fasting*. Compare David's fast when his child was sick, 2 S. 12.16.—*Instruments of music*. Or, *dancing girls*, RVm.

20. *Is thy God able to deliver thee from the lions?* "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" Gen. 18.14.

22. *God hath sent his angel*. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's words in 3.28. "God always has an angel of help for those who are willing to do their duty" (Cuyler). "Bunyan's pilgrim, alarmed at the first sight of the roaring lions, found ere long that they were chained: and there is no distress of the Christian life, whence Heaven will not find for us a way of escape" (Watkinson).—*Innocency was found in me*. Note the confession of his accusers, verse 4.

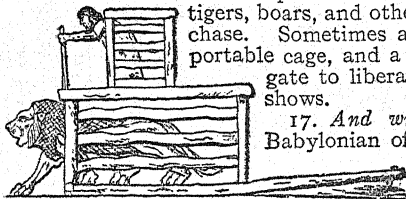
LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

10. *Toward Jerusalem*. "Jews in foreign lands turn in prayer toward the land of Jerusalem; in the land of Jerusalem, toward Jerusalem; and in Jerusalem, toward the Temple," says the Talmud. Mohammed first ordered his disciples to face Jerusalem when they prayed, but after his quarrel with the Jews he had them face Mecca. In all Mohammedan mosques there is today a niche, or small alcove, called the *Mihrab*, which marks the *Kiblah*, the direction in which Mecca lies. When we visited many Turkish mosques with a Mohammedan dragoman, we learned that the lofty domes, the spacious floors with their wonderful rugs, the corner pulpits, even the serpentine pillars in St. Sophia

that came from the Temple of Ephesus and the porphyry columns brought there from the Temple of Baalbec, were of no consequence compared with the *Mihrabs* which he always pointed out with awe, and toward which he faced and offered a prayer when we were otherwise occupied. "Praying toward a holy place is a reminder of that which makes that place holy," explains Dr. Trumbull in "Studies in Social Life," "and if a worshiper can be in that place instead of merely praying toward it he feels that the value of his prayers is manifold. Thus a Mohammedan feels that a prayer at Mecca counts for seventy thousand prayers away from there."

12. *The law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.* The strict etiquette of the Persian court obliged the king never to revoke an order once given, however much he might regret it, because in so doing he would contradict himself, and, according to Persian notions, the law could not contradict itself. A curious instance of the unchangeable character of the Medo-Persian law is seen in the fact that, after Ahasuerus had issued the order directing the cruel slaughter of the Jews (Esther 3.13), he would not reverse it even at the urgent request of Esther, but he issued another edict in which he granted the Jews permission "to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life." Thus the first irreversible edict was completely neutralized by another just as irreversible as itself; and the king continued to act his part as a character but little short of divinity: infallible, immutable, and wholly free from the weakness of repentance!—James Freeman, in "Bible Manners and Customs."

12. *The den of lions.* Babylonia abounded in lions, and lion-hunting is the royal sport frequently pictured on walls and tablets. The Persians had large enclosed parks which they called "Paradises," where lions, tigers, boars, and other wild animals were kept for the royal chase. Sometimes a lion was brought into the field in a portable cage, and a slave standing on the top raised the gate to liberate it for the hunt, as our illustration shows.



Letting out a Lion. From a Bas-Relief of Sardanapalus III

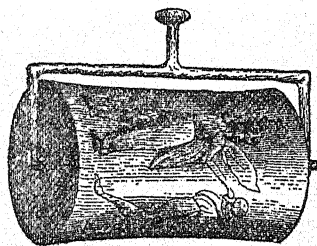
17. *And with the signet of his lords.* "Every Babylonian of any importance at all carried a seal, generally in the shape of a cylinder, which was used to stamp their baked-clay documents of all kinds." One too poor to own a seal made an impression with his thumb on

the damp clay. It is interesting to recall that the signet, or seal, of Darius Hystaspis represented the king as engaged in a lion hunt.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Medo-Persian Empire. Many years have passed since Daniel's three friends had their "fiery trial." Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and four successors have died, the Babylonian Empire has come to an end, having been conquered by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus (539 B.C.), and Daniel himself is an old man, occupying the highest position of responsibility and honor. For a fuller history see p. 372.

Daniel's Positions at Court. When a young man, after interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2; and Historical Background of the last lesson), Daniel was made "to rule over the whole province of Babylon, and to be chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon." On the death of that monarch he seems to have lost his high position, for Belshazzar, as a reward for interpreting the handwriting on the wall (chapter v.), exalted him, making him "the third ruler in the kingdom." That night Belshazzar was slain, but Darius the Mede made Daniel one of the three presidents who controlled the one hundred and twenty satraps, and found so "excellent a spirit in him" that he purposed placing him over the whole realm. The jealousy of the two other presidents and of all the satraps was aroused, and they plotted together



A Seal Cylinder

to get rid of him. The sequel our lesson tells. It is about an attempt to prevent a man from privately worshipping the God whom he believed, in contrast with last week's lesson which was about an attempt to make men publicly worship a god in whom they did not believe.

Belshazzar and Nabonidus, Darius and Cyrus. In the book of Daniel the name of the last king of Babylon is Belshazzar, and that of the conqueror is Darius, while secular history says that the last king was Nabonidus and the conqueror was Cyrus. Recent archaeological discoveries have helped to solve the problem. Inscriptions have been found showing that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, that he was associated with his father as ruler of Babylon, and that he was killed "by night" by the army of Cyrus under Gobryas. Daniel was "the third ruler in the kingdom," Nabonidus being the first and Belshazzar the second. A tablet dated thirteen years after the fall of Babylon calls Gobryas "governor of Babylon." "Darius the Mede" may have been another name for Gobryas, who ruled as governor under Cyrus.

Daniel's House. It was at one of the capitals of the Persian Empire, probably Babylon, that Daniel lived. His house was probably a large building where he "did the king's business," many of whose rooms were set apart for the various officials who were under his superintendence. His "chamber" was built upon one corner of the flat roof, or formed the upper part of a tower-like addition to the main building.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Do you know how many of your pupils pray night and morning? Inquire today how many prayed this morning. A Sunday-school worker who has investigated the prayer habit of pupils, old and young, in hundreds of schools, reports that scarcely five per cent kneel in a word of prayer in the morning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is said about Daniel in the third verse of our chapter? A little girl was once reading this verse, and instead of saying "an excellent spirit was in him," she said, "an excellent spine was in him." Her reading was true, for certainly Daniel was a man of "firm backbone," as we say; no one could tempt him to be untrue to his principles. How did he first prove this?

For Older Pupils. It is interesting to compare the three stories of loyalty to God in the face of death of Daniel's three friends (last week's lesson), of Daniel himself in our lesson of today, and of the soldiers of Antiochus Epiphanes, as told in Second Maccabees. This is the third story: "They set the battle in array against the Jews on the Sabbath day. And they said, 'Come forth and do according to the word of the king, and ye shall live.' And they said, 'We will not come forth, neither will we do the word of the king, to profane the Sabbath day.' And they hastened to give them battle. And they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, saying, 'Let us die in our innocence.' And they rose up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they died, they and their wives and children." These soldiers of Antiochus preferred to die rather than break the Sabbath. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had been willing to die rather than bow down to an image, as Daniel had been willing to die rather than give up his daily prayers. It was these stories of the great steadfastness of Daniel and of his friends which inspired the Jews in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes to remain loyal to God in the face of persecution and death.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THREE TIMES A DAY

Prayer and Trust. "No manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in God"—thus ends our story of Daniel in the lion's den. Daniel trusted in God at this crisis because he had always been faithful in his Christian duties at ordinary times, because it had always been his custom to kneel upon his knees three times a day and pray and give thanks before his God. We cannot rise to the heroic in a day of crisis if we have not acquired stores of strength in the ordinary days. We cannot live a life of trust if we do not live a life of prayer. A prayerless Christian—if such a Christian is possible—cannot be a trustful Christian.

No doubt Daniel's prayer at this time was for help, for he well knew what would be the penalty of his not heeding that decree. But he also "gave thanks before God as he did aforetime." Prayer is not always petition. In a village of German East Africa a young native was made sport of by his companions because they had followed him and had found out that he often went away to pray. It was something they could not understand, something laughable, that one should pray without any special reason for it. They prayed to their gods when there was some pressing need, some danger from which they would be freed, but to pray regularly and often was new to their thoughts. Prayer to a Christian is communion with his Father. What child is there who would talk with his earthly father only when he had some request to make of him? Do you know from your own experience what a life of prayer means? Why do you pray?

A Place and a Time for Prayer. "Enter into thy closet and pray," counseled Jesus. It is a great help to have some special place, some quiet retreat, some nook, where you can always be alone with God. Reserve that place for your devotions, for the habit of always praying in the same place and of never doing anything else in that place, helps the mind to enter quickly into communion with the Father. It is a great help, too, to have some special times for prayer, which are as much a part of your fixed daily programs as your time for rising, as invariable as your hour for going to school or to business. Open your windows! You must have the fresh air on which your physical strength depends, and you must have the windows of your soul open toward God, for he is the Infinite Source of your spiritual strength.

The Practice of Nominal Christians. Nawa, in the Hauran (Eastern Palestine) is entirely a Moslem place with the exception of some sixty shops which are kept by Christians. When one of these Christians was asked if they had any church, he replied, "Oh, no, but any one who can read the Bible does so." "And do the others listen?" "No, each one reads or not as he likes, alone, but mostly they just attend to their shops." "What a pity not to show more care for our religion before the Moslems!" the questioner suggested. "Yes, it is true," he admitted, "they never neglect their prayer."

Tom Brown's Prayer. In "Tom Brown's School Days," after Tom had been at school a year or more, a new boy entered. When this boy was ready for bed the first night, he looked around the big sleeping room with its twelve occupants and then bravely dropped on his knees and prayed before them all. Two or three boys laughed and sneered, and one threw a slipper at the kneeling boy, calling him a sniveling young sham. Tom promptly threw his boot at the young bully; tumult was quieted by the entrance of the verger who put out the lights. Tom could not sleep. He thought of his mother and the promise he had made her that he would never forget at night to kneel by his bedside and pray. Then he thought of how he had broken that promise. The first few nights after coming to the school, he found that the other boys did not pray, and he had waited till the lights were out and then he stole out of bed to say his prayers when no one could see him. Then he began to think that he might as well say his prayers in bed, and then that it didn't matter whether he was kneeling or sitting or lying down. And next it came to pass that for the last year he had not prayed at all.

Poor fourteen-year-old Tom! "The first and bitterest feeling was the sense of his own cowardice. He had lied to his mother, to his conscience, to his God. And then the poor little weak boy had done what he, braggart as he was, dared not do. He resolved to write home and tell his mother what a coward her son had been. And then peace came to him as he resolved to bear his testimony next morning. The morning would be harder than the night to begin with, but he felt that he could not afford to let one chance slip. Several times he faltered, for the devil showed him, first, all his old friends calling him 'Saint' and 'Square-toes,' and a dozen other hard names; and then came the more subtle temptation, 'Have I any right to begin it now? Ought I not rather to pray in my own study, letting other boys know that I do so, and trying to lead them to it, while in public, at least, I should go on as I have done?'" But he resolved to follow the right impulse.

Next morning in the face of the whole room he knelt down to pray, and rose from his knees comforted and ready to face the whole world. It was not needed: two other boys besides Arthur had already followed his example,

and he went down to the great school with a glimmering of another lesson in his heart—the lesson that he who has conquered his own coward spirit has conquered the whole outward world; and that other one which the prophet learned in the cave at Mount Horeb, when he hid his face and the still small voice asked, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” that however we may fancy ourselves alone on the side of good, the King and Lord of men is nowhere without his witnesses; for in every society, however seemingly corrupt and godless, there are those “who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”

How Shall We Learn to Pray? Take a little time every day to form a habit of communion with the Invisible. Follow Jesus Christ into his solitude. Forget for a few moments the visible world, the earthly companionship and earthly duties, and summon out from the invisible world the invisible Presence.

Take for this “silent hour” the time when the mind is at its best. Do you awake fresh and full of life? Save a little of this awaking hour for communion with God. Are you wide awake and more alert at night? Give to communion with your Father a few moments of this hour when the world no longer knocks at your door.

If we do not set aside certain times, we shall soon discover that we have no time. Every physician will advise his patient to have certain times for meals, and certain times for rest, and certain times for sleep. Every teacher will advise his pupil to have certain times for study. Regularity is essential to the formation of habit, and the formation of habit is the way to develop character. For action oft repeated becomes habit, and habit long continued becomes second nature. Prayer will never become second nature by fitful indulgence on occasions of special stress.

What shall we do when, at the appointed time, we are not moved to prayer? At such a time of spiritual dulness, which comes to all souls sometimes and to some souls many times, the prayer of a winged soul may uplift us. Who, for example, can read in the morning Stevenson's “Morning Prayer” and not find in it at least an inspiring wish if not a true petition: “Purge out of every heart the lurking grudge. Give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Offenders, give us the grace and strength to accept and to forgive offenses. Forgetful ourselves, help us to bear cheerfully the forgetfulness of others. Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies.”—“The Outlook.”

When to Pray.

Pray therefore when thy heart is light,
And he has made thee glad;
Pray in the dark and stormy night,
When life has made thee sad;
Pray with the opening of the day,
Pray in the great world's rush,
And find repose in prayer to God
In the evening's calm and hush.—Marianne Farningham.

II TOWARD

Which Way Should a Christian Face? “Whither do you turn at the hour of prayer?” a pious Moslem asked a Christian missionary. “Whither should I turn?” the latter asked in reply, and the Moslem said: “We, the true believers, turn to Mecca, the holy place, and the Jews turn to Jerusalem; but to what holy place do you, a Christian, face in your devotions?” “I turn myself heavenward to the One true God,” then answered the missionary. “You verily have the truth,” admitted the Moslem, “for the Holy Person is more than the holy place.”

Toward Sodom or Toward Jerusalem? Back in the early days of the history of the Hebrew people we read that Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, and that was the beginning of his downfall. He faced the wrong way. The windows of Daniel's chamber were open toward Jerusalem. He faced the right way. In these two notes of direction we are told the life history of these two men in brief. The trend of Lot's life after he pitched his tent toward Sodom was along the line of the wickedness of Sodom. The trend of Daniel's life was toward Jerusalem and God. Lot began by walking in the counsels of the wicked; soon he was standing in the way of sinners, and not long afterward he was sitting in the seat of the scorers: this is the way sin always progresses. The

deflection from the strict path of duty may be very slight, merely a supposedly momentary facing toward the wrong, but the trend in that direction once established, the path leads far away from the direct line of duty.

The Inner Motive that Decides the Trend. In my college days I was the pitcher on the university ball nine. I suppose every young man understands the art of curved pitching. Suppose I take a ball in my hand. I can throw this ball perfectly straight for twenty or thirty feet, but at the end of my throw it will swerve from its course to the right; or, again, I can throw this ball, so far as you can see, precisely the same way, and again it will go perfectly straight for thirty feet, and then at the end of the throw swerve to the left. Now, the secret of this all is in the spiral motion given to the ball as it leaves the pitcher's hand; but this spiral motion given to it by the pitcher you are unable to see, and two balls which seem to you to start in the same way, and to be following exactly the same direction, in the end may swerve in exactly opposite directions. Now, it is just so oftentimes with the moral man and with the Christian. They may seem to be going in exactly the same direction. As far as you can see there is no difference between them. The one is as good and pure and noble as the other; but the truth is that one has that inner heart spiral motion which at the end is going to swerve him away from God, and the other that inner heart motion that shall bear him at last to the very bosom of God. The vital thing about these lives of ours is not entirely the outward walk. Nay! but rather the inner motion of the heart. The trouble with your moral men lies not so much in the outward life as in the heart. The inner motion is wrong, and it always will be wrong until Jesus comes therein to change it.—Merle Smith, in "Giving a Man Another Chance."

III HOW GOD DELIVERS

Daniel Did not Know What the Outcome Would Be. Daniel was a Puritan. He lived a long way from Plymouth Rock; he had been dead for two thousand years when that compact was signed in the cabin of the Mayflower. He had never read a line of John Milton; he knew nothing about Oliver Cromwell. But he was a Puritan none the less. He insisted upon the rights of the individual conscience as against the dictates of arbitrary authority. Let King Darius publish his decree! Let the princes and presidents insist that the laws of the Medes and Persians alter not! Let them utter their threat about the den of lions! This ancient Puritan will stand for the right as God gives him to see the right, taking all the risks involved. He will stake his all upon fidelity to duty and trust to the march of events to justify the wisdom of his course. When you find that spirit in any land or age you find the Puritan.

His enemies had it in writing that if he offered his prayer he would be eaten by the lions. Poor, deluded, short-sighted mortals, that was all they knew! Daniel himself did not know what the outcome might be—he went like Abraham of old, not knowing whither he went. It was another instance where moral faith transcended the considerations of expediency. The man who walks in the light true to the highest he sees, keeping his life faced toward the great right things of justice, mercy and truth, walks in safety. Yea, though he walks through the valley of the shadow of death, he fears no evil, for God is with him. Facing his life steadily upon righteousness he knows that nothing can permanently defeat him!—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in "The Quest of Life."

There is Safety in Courage Combined with Innocence. Lions are not cannibalistic, they will not devour their own species, lion respects lion; and so they saw in Daniel the features of their own royal breed, and left him unscathed. How majestic is courage combined with innocence! This is the main lesson of Daniel in the lions' den. He had faith in God, was absolutely loyal to the truth, and with a pure heart dared everything and triumphed. Our defense from the powers of darkness is in the heroism of faith and purity.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in "Gates of Dawn."

My Shield is with God.

O Jehovah my God, in thee do I take refuge;
Save me from all them that pursue me, and deliver me,
Lest they tear my soul like a lion,
Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.
My shield is with God,
Who saveth the upright in heart.—From the Seventh Psalm.

Whosoever Putteth His Trust in Jehovah Shall be Safe. In this affirmation from the Book of Proverbs, what does the word *safe* mean? Does it mean that one who trusts God will never be harmed, never suffer calamity? Assuredly not. Does it mean that one who trusts God will suffer less than one who does not trust him? Rather is it true that the best men suffer more and the worst men suffer less, for the best men have the greater capacity for suffering. It means what Socrates meant when he said, "Know this of a surety that no evil can happen to a good man either in this life or after death." Burdens and trouble and sorrow and suffering are the lot of the Christian, from these is he not kept, but by them he is disciplined, not overcome, in them he is safe, and in God's good plan for him they are not an evil, they work together for good.

"How do you keep so calm under heavy burdens?" Mr. Gladstone was once asked. "That is the secret," he answered, pointing to a framed Scripture text which faced him at every morning's awakening. The text read, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth thee."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 10. Prayer has an "hour," it has a place, in our life; it is no more to be crowded out than the most vital practice of receiving one's daily food.—Dr. C. C. Hall.

Verse 10. The day that prayer dies in a man's soul he commits spiritual suicide.—Donald Sage Mackay.

Verse 18.

Heed how thou livest. Do no act by day
Which from the night shall drive thy peace away.—Whittier.

Verse 22. He who purposes in his heart not to defile himself may reasonably expect deliverance from the lions' den.—H. Butterworth.

Verse 22.

Oh, well for him whose will is strong;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer long,
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.—Tennyson.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Prayer to a Christian is communion with his Heavenly Father. What child is there who would talk with his earthly father only when he had some request to make of him? Do you know from your own experience what a life of prayer means? Why do you pray? If you will follow this counsel of Dr. Charles R. Brown you will know the help that comes from prayer. "Early in the morning, before you come down into the streets of Babylon to hear its talk and breathe its impoverished atmosphere, open your windows. Look out upon the sources of strength. Wait upon him until your soul mounts up with wings like an eagle. Wait upon him until your moral nature can run upon errands of usefulness and not grow weary. Let your heart gain a fresh sense of the moral interest he cherishes toward you—and you will not be afraid of Babylon with all its lions. When the day is over you will sleep better when your windows are open spiritually as well as physically. Lift up your eyes unto the hills from whence cometh help. Then you will be able to say, 'I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou makest me to dwell in safety.'"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Worry and sleep.
2. Is it possible to be a Christian in secret, not openly?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Assign whatever written work you wish to have brought to class for review. In your Note-Book write "XIII: Daniel in the Lions' Den."

REVIEW. THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD

Golden Text

Jehovah is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness. Psalm 103.8

READ Daniel 9.3-19

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

Ask each of your pupils to come prepared to give an account of a special lesson. If there are fewer than twelve pupils in the class, assign two lessons to some of them. As each lesson is being told, write its outline on the board.

- | | |
|---|--|
| I. Sanctity of God
Service of Isaiah | II. Sacrilegious
sacrifices |
| III. Passover
posts summon | IV. Sennacherib's boast
smitten by God |
| V. God's Blessings are
God's Promises do not | VI. Repentance
reparation |
| VII. Remembering God
Repairing the Temple | VIII. Finding the Book
following the Covenant |
| IX. Jerusalem
Judah in | X. Shepherd's
Search |
| XI. Heroic
Happy | XII. Fiery
urnace |
| Resolve
Result | Divine
Deliverance |
| XIII. Faithful in Prayer
reed from Peril | |

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

For a written review, copy each quotation below on a separate sheet of paper, as many of each as there are pupils in your class, and give one to each pupil. After he has written a brief account of the lesson to which the quotation alludes, let him have another quotation.

As an oral review much interest will be aroused by letting all who recognize the allusion signify this after the reading of each quotation. Call for the statement.

The Lord hath said that he will seek his flock
In cloudy and dark days, and they shall dwell
Securely in the wilderness, and sleep
Safe in the woods!

—Longfellow.

Take the task he gives you gladly,

Let his work your pleasure be;

Answer quickly, when he calleth,

"Here am I, send me, send me." —Daniel March.

How many Christians there are who, like those priests, are unusable because unsanctified! While on every hand opportunities call for the devotion of their energies, they are unfitted to lay hold of them.—J. Stuart Holden.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

—Byron.

It must be so. The death-pangs of the Devil
Will make him more a Devil than before;
And Nebuchadnezzar's furnace will be heated
Seven times more hot before its putting out.—Longfellow.

Like many another, when brought low and made to realize his true estate, he then turned to ask favor at God's hand. And like many another, too, he found it. The reality of his experience of God was afterwards attested in the reformation of which he was the active instrument.—J. Stuart Holden.

A Daniel come to Judgment! Yea, a Daniel!
O wise young Judge, how I do honor thee.—Shakespeare.

The Nebuchadnezzars are God's axes with which he hews down fruitless trees. They are responsible for their acts, but they are his instruments, and it is his hand that wields them.—Maclaren.

In the kingdom of God it "is not the showy qualities of conspicuous ability which mark men as being the most effective workers; but it is always to the men who do work faithfully that the Crown of Life is promised."

Be it flood or blood the path that's trod,
All the same it leads to God.
Be it furnace fire voluminous
One like God's son will walk with us.

—Christina G. Rosetti.

What wonderful transformations are produced by God's grace. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree. The thorn is a minister of pain, sharp and piercing. The fir is the wood from which was made the framework of the harps and other instruments of music. And so the realm of pain is to be changed into the home of harmony.—J. H. Jowett.

The king directed the Levites to cleanse the Temple, and when this work was done he reinaugurated the Temple services with a great dedication feast.

"He determined to maintain his old-time purity in the midst of his new-time environment."

He who shows me the achievements of a brother man touches my lips with a live coal from off the altar.—Carlyle.

These intruders were all unconscious of the meaning of their victory, and the tragedy of their presence there. They thought that they were Nebuchadnezzar's servants, and had captured for him an obstinate little city, which had given more trouble than it was worth.—Maclaren.

The book contained explicit directions as to worship and conduct, and as the penalty of national disobedience decreed the loss of home and country, the sentence of the offenders was cumulative. For many generations warnings and precepts had alike been neglected, and when the day of doom should come, the sins of the fathers also should be visited upon the children. Could the doom be averted by speedy and complete obedience and penitence?—McCurdy.

He was a great scholar; he made a huge fortune; he rose to be a peer; she was a noted beauty, a leader of fashion, a queen of society—what will all such epitaphs be worth, if God's finger carves silently below them, "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord"?—Maclaren.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. Who was it that said, "Here am I, send me"?
2. Why is Ahaz called "the Faithless King"?
3. What king made a great boast, which was not fulfilled?
4. What beautiful invitation does one of our lessons from Isaiah contain?
5. What boy became king when only eight years old, and what sort of king was he?
6. What book caused a great excitement, and to what did its reading lead?
7. What king captured Jerusalem, and what did he do with a great many of her people?
8. What boys ranked head and shoulders above all their fellows after a three years' course, and why?
9. Why were three young men thrown into a fiery furnace?
10. When and where did Daniel pray?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Who is the most attractive character of our lessons, and why?
2. Who was Hilkiah, and for what is he famed?
3. In what ways did Daniel show his loyalty to principle?
4. When and by whom was Jerusalem taken, and what became of the people?
5. Draw a map of Western Asia showing Assyria and Palestine, and trace the route of the captives from Jerusalem to Babylon.
6. What caused the fall of the kingdom of Judah?
7. Tell about Isaiah's call to service.
8. Tell what you know about Hezekiah.
9. Give an account of the finding of the Book of the Law.
10. What is wrong with this quotation from a sermon: "Dare to be a Daniel: when everybody else bowed down to the image, he would not—he remembered God and God remembered him for good."

REVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

1. Name the Historical Books of the Old Testament.
2. Why have we two books each of Kings and Chronicles?
3. In which kingdom is Chronicles interested?
4. What history is covered by Second Chronicles?
5. Who wrote Chronicles?
6. What was his purpose in writing?
7. What lessons for today has II Chronicles?
8. What period is covered by the books of Kings?
9. Upon what framework is the account of each king written?
10. What lessons have the books of Kings for us?
11. Name the Prophetical Books of the Old Testament.
12. What prophetical books have we studied this quarter?
13. What are the two largest prophetical books?
14. What views are held as to the authorship of Isaiah?
15. What period is covered by the book of Isaiah?
16. What can you say about Isaiah as a poet and an orator?
17. What have others thought about the literary value of Isaiah?
18. What lessons for us has the book?
19. What views are held in regard to the authorship of the book of Daniel?
20. What statements in the book have caused trouble in the past which now we understand?
21. What is the message of Daniel?
22. What are its lessons for today?

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Before class-time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture should be covered with paper attached at the top so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls. Or, copy the pictures by tracing them on thin paper and paste the copies on twelve cards; let the pupils write the stories beneath the pictures.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

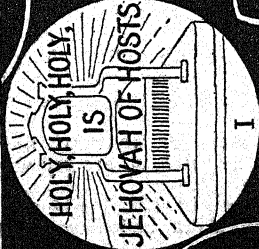
I. A man is having a wonderful vision, a vision of God upon a throne, worshiped by strange beings. Who was the man? What did one of those strange beings do with a live coal? What question did the man hear? What did he answer?

II. We are in a valley with a great crowd of people. There is a fire burning, and we smell the odor of incense. Now we are upon a hill where there are altars before which a crowd of people are bowing down. What are they doing? What king worshiped idols, too?

III. Men are riding up and down the country, north and south of Jerusalem, and delivering letters as they go. From all parts of the country great crowds are now coming to Jerusalem. Why?

IV. A great army is encamped against Jerusalem. Now they are fleeing in hot haste. Why?

V. A prophet is talking to a crowd of people, and is telling them what God wants them to do. "Ho, every one that thirsteth," he begins. Can you finish his words? What did he mean by "buying without money"?



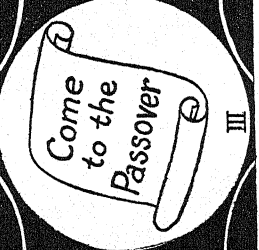
I

OUR GOD
IS ABLE TO
DELIVER US

XII

A
FAITHLESS
KING

II



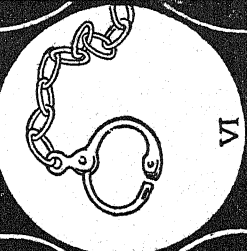
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Refuge
GOD
Strength

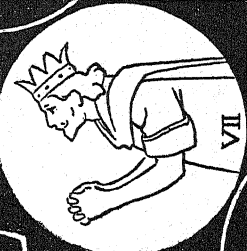
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THE
GREAT
INVITATION

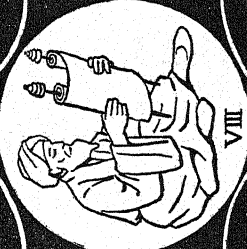
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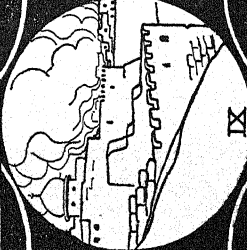
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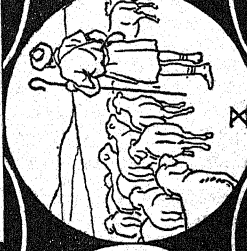
VII




VIII




IX



X



XI



XIII

Jehovah is merciful
and gracious, Slow to
anger, and abundant
in loving kindness.

Psalms 103:8.

VI. I see a man bound in chains being carried away captive. Who is he? Now he is praying. What is his request? God gave him his wish, for now I see him in a great city where he is worshiping God.

VII. A young lad is being crowned. Who is he? In the next scene he has grown much older, and is giving direction about a great building. What is the building, and what is he having done to it?

VIII. The same king is on his throne, and a man is reading to him. Now he is greatly excited, and is tearing his robe. Why? A great crowd of people are now listening to the reading of that same book. What promise do they make?

IX. A great city is being attacked by a huge army. They are breaking down the walls, and setting fire to the city. A king who is blind and in chains is being carried away as a captive, and there are many, many people also who are being taken away from their country. What is the city, who are the king and the people, and where are they being taken?

X. A prophet is telling a beautiful story about a good shepherd. Whom does he mean by the shepherd? What does he say the shepherd will do?

XI. Here in the first scene I see two rooms: in one a number of young men are eating delicacies and drinking wine; in the other there are four young men who are eating plain food and drinking water. In the second scene those four young men are standing before a king and he is talking with them. Who are the young men? Why did they eat and drink such plain fare? What is the king saying to them?

XII. Three young men are talking very earnestly with a king, and the king is very angry. Workmen in this next scene are building a huge fire in a furnace. What is going to happen?

XIII. In the first scene, a man is kneeling before an open window. In the second, several officers are talking with a king. In the third, the first man is being thrown into a den. Why? What is the result?

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verse which—

Begins, "Woe is me!"
Speaks about the time to seek Jehovah.
Affirms how Josiah reigned.
Begins, "Our God whom we serve is able."
Begins, "Jehovah your God is gracious."
Declares that God's word shall be fulfilled.
Talks about something that can be bought without money.
Promises that God shall be the good shepherd of his people.
Voices Nebuchadnezzar's hope of what God would do for Daniel.
Compare God's thoughts and ways with man's.
Gives Daniel's request for pure water and plain fare.

Give the book and the chapter where these words are found:

And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? then I said, Here am I: send me.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out.

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us . . . But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods.

He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

A REVIEW CONTEST

Let two classes unite for this review, each with a leader. Let the teacher of Class A ask the questions, and the teacher of Class B keep the record. Class A is asked the first question, and all who think they can answer hold up their hands. The teacher of class A decides who shall answer. The teacher who is judge then writes a credit or a debit mark for Class A. If the answer is wrong, the question is then given to Class B. The second question is given to Class B, the third to Class A, and so on. Questions should all be such as can be answered in a word or two. Space does not permit a full set of questions here, but teachers can easily prepare in advance a sufficiently long list?

1. Who were thrown into the fiery furnace?
2. Who was king when Jerusalem was taken?
3. By whom was Jerusalem taken?
4. When was Jerusalem taken?
5. In whose reign did Isaiah have his vision of God?
6. What sort of king was Ahaz?

SUBJECTS FOR WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

For Younger Pupils.

1. The story of a king who was alarmed by the reading of a book.
2. The story of the destruction of a beautiful city and the fate of its people.
3. The story of the crowning of a boy king.
4. A story about Daniel.
5. A story about three Friends of Daniel.

For Older Pupils.

1. A connected history of the main events in Judah from the reign of Uzziah to the Fall of Jerusalem.
2. Manasseh's and Josiah's reigns as typical reigns in Judah's history.
3. The reason for the captivity of Judah.
4. The benefits of total abstinence.
5. The prophet Isaiah.
6. The Book of Isaiah.
7. The Book of Daniel.
8. The Book of Second Chronicles.
9. The Book of Second Kings.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the situation in Judah during the Exile? (*Guide*, p. 362.) 2. What did the exiles find on their return? (*Guide*, p. 363.) 3. What was the condition of Jerusalem? (*Guide*, p. 363.) 4. What is the background of these two Psalms? (*Guide*, p. 363.) 5. What is Psalm 85 called in the Revised Version? 6. What is the meaning of the word "Selah"? (*Guide*, p. 361.) 7. Explain the second clause of verse 8. (*Guide*, p. 361.) 8. With verse 12 compare Ps. 84.11.

Questions to Think About. 1. What is "thy land," verse 1 of Psalm 85, and why is it so called? 2. What does the second clause of the first verse mean? 3. For whom does "Jacob" stand, and why so used? 4. What is the meaning of "Thou hast covered all their sin"? 5. What does the word "quicken," verse 6, mean? 6. Who were the "saints," verse 8? (*Guide*, p. 361.) 7. What is the meaning of verse 10? (*Guide*, p. 361.) 8. Explain the mood in which the first verse of the 126th Psalm is spoken. (*Guide*, p. 362.) 9. The second verse. (*Guide*, p. 362.) 10. The figure of speech in the fourth verse. (*Guide*, p. 362.) 11. Make an outline of the 85th Psalm. 12. Make an outline of the 126th Psalm. 13. Which verses are verses of praise? 14. Which are verses of petition? 15. Which are verses of trust? 16. Do you have as many mercies as you deserve? 17. For what mercies do you thank God? 18. For what blessings do you ask God?

Memory Work. Commit the 126th Psalm to memory.

FOURTH QUARTER

LESSON I—OCTOBER 7

PSALMS OF DELIVERANCE

Golden Text

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Psalm 126.5

LESSON Psalms 85 and 126 MEMORIZE Psalm 85.10, 11

85.1 Jehovah, thou hast been favorable unto thy land; thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. 2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. [Selah.] 3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath; thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger. 4 Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine indignation toward us to cease. 5 Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? 6 Wilt thou not quicken us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? 7 Show us thy lovingkindness, O Jehovah, and grant us thy salvation. 8 I will hear what God Jehovah will speak; For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly. 9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. 10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. 11 Truth springeth out of the earth; and righteousness hath looked down from heaven. 12 Yea, Jehovah will give that which is good; and our land shall yield its increase. 13 Righteousness shall go before him, and shall make his footsteps a way *to walk in*.

126.1 When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like unto them that dream. 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: Then said they among the nations, Jehovah hath done great things for them. 3 Jehovah hath done great things for us, *whereof* we are glad. 4 Turn again our captivity, O Jehovah, as the streams in the South. 5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

Psalm 85.

- I. Praise for the Past, 1-3.
- II. Prayer for the Present, 4-7.
- III. Hope for the Future, 8-13.

Psalm 126.

- I. Joy on the Return from Captivity, 1-3.
- II. A Prayer and Prophecy of Complete Deliverance, 4-6.

85. 1. Verses 1-3 look back to the exile—*Thou hast been favorable unto thy land*. Psalm 77, which is appropriate for the time of the exile, questions: "Will the Lord cast off forever? And will he be favorable no more?" This Psalm, probably written after the exile, recognizes that the Lord has been favorable to his land and people. The verb is an aorist, as Dr. Briggs points out, and refers to a definite event in the past, probably the rebuilding of Jerusalem.—*Thy land*. Canaan was the Lord's chosen land, as the Jews were his chosen people. "It is most wise to plead the Lord's union of interest with ourselves, to lash our little boat, as it were, close to his great bark, and experience a sacred community in the tossings of the storm. It is *our* land that is devastated, but, O Jehovah, it is also *thy* land" (Spurgeon).—*Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob*. Restored the Israelites from exile. *Jacob* was a term for themselves which the people loved.

2. *Thou hast covered all their sin.* Put it out of sight, out of remembrance.—*Selah.* This word is found seventy-one times in the Psalms. Various explanations of its meaning are current, the usually accepted one being that it directs the musicians to give a musical interlude: the word is translated *interlude* in the Septuagint. It may mean "Repeat": today in a Jewish service any one in the congregation may call out "Selah," and the last part must be repeated.

3. *Taken away all thy wrath.* See Ps. 78.38.—*From the fierceness of thine anger.*—Compare Ps. 106.23; Ex. 32.12. Both the sin of the nation and God's righteous anger thereat are removed.

4. Verses 4-7 refer to present conditions.—*Turn us.* Or, *turn to us*, RVm. *Restore us*, as in the marginal rendering of the same expression in Ps. 80.3.—*O God of our salvation.* "God who had so often saved his people that he could be regarded as having salvation as a characteristic" (Briggs).—*Cause thine indignation toward us to cease.* They have again incurred God's displeasure.

5. *Will thou . . . wilt thou?* "When will these results of our past sin be swept away? Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Must the scars remain? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Ross). "The questions imply a negative answer, for such a thing was incredible to the people of Jehovah, in view of the past experience of the nation" (Briggs).—*Draw out.* Prolong.—*To all generations.* "Shall sons suffer for their fathers and punishment become an entailed inheritance?" (Spurgeon).

6. *Wilt thou not quicken us again?* Make alive, revive. "The question implies a positive answer, for the 'again' is based on previous experience of quickening, that is, the revival of the nation by the impartation of new life and vigor to them" (Briggs).

8. Verses 8-13 are a bright picture of the future.—*I will hear what God Jehovah will speak.* "Having offered earnest intercession for the afflicted but penitent nation, the sacred poet in the true spirit of faith awaits a response from the sacred oracle. He pauses in joyful confidence, and then in ecstatic triumph he gives utterance to his hopes in the richest form of song" (Spurgeon).—*He will speak peace.* See Ps. 29.11; peace from trouble.—*Saints.* His people. "The Hebrew word denotes those who are objects of Jehovah's lovingkindness. *Saint*, literally *servant*, as applied to Israel, expresses the relation in which Jehovah has placed the nation toward himself, without necessarily implying that its character corresponds to its calling" (Kirkpatrick).—*Let them not turn again to folly.* "Nothing is more surprising than the way in which after being forgiven and restored we revert to old sins. Scientists remind us of 'The law of recession toward mediocrity.' That is, when a plant or an animal, for some reason or other, attains eminent beauty or strength, a sinister law of degeneration sets in to bring the more perfect type back to the inferior. How this law of recession obtains in the saint, who often finds it difficult to maintain the heights and perfections reached in privileged seasons!" (Watkinson).

9. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him.* "Faith knows that the saving God is always near at hand" (Spurgeon).—*That glory may dwell in our land.* This seems to refer to the Shechinah, the symbol of God's presence: this Ezekiel in his vision saw departing from the Temple, Ezek. 10.18, and then returning, Ezek. 43.4. Another interpretation is that it is glory in a general sense, in contrast with the existing shame.

10. *Mercy, truth, righteousness, peace.* These attributes are all personified.—*Are met together.* "As angel messengers of Jehovah they have been on separate missions in different directions: returning from these missions they all meet in the Holy Land, the first pair are met together" (Briggs).—*Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* Are united in love. "This Psalm has always been regarded as Messianic in character; this verse has found its particular fulfilment in Christ."

11. Whether the four attributes of verse 10 are divine or human is often discussed. Primarily they are divine, but this verse shows that "the restored community will reflect the attributes of God." "Earth carpeted with truth and canopied with righteousness." "The far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves."

12. *Will give that which is good.* "No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly," Ps. 84.11.

13. *Make his footsteps a way to walk in.* Or, *set us in the way of his steps*, RVm. "God teaches man to walk in his footsteps" (Maclaren). "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," Mt. 5.48.

126. 1. *We were like unto them that dream.* The first feeling was one of dazed bewildering; it all seemed too good to be true.

126. 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* When the moment of full realization came, we broke out into songs and laughter.—*Then said they among the nations.* Our next thought was how the surrounding nations would regard our great good fortune.

126. 3. *Jehovah hath done great things for us.* We realize that what the other nations said, is true, and joyously we re-echo the words as our own conviction.

126. 4. *Turn again our captivity, O Jehovah.* "The writer turns from recording the impressions of a great event into a teacher who unfolds its underlying truths. The captivity becomes to him a symbol of all the stress and trial, the frustrated purposes, the disappointment and sorrow, of the human lot" (Berry).—*As the streams in the South.* The Negeb. The dry water course of the streams in the arid country south of Judea become rushing torrents after a heavy rain. "Would that to our hearts and churches might come abundant life, as when the snows melt in the springtime and flush the brooks!" (Meyer).

126. 5. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.* Compare John 16.20. Sowing and reaping have always symbolized the beginning of an undertaking and its result. The sowers here are the first exiles who returned, the pioneers.

126. 6. *Doubtless.* "Often the farmer who sows in anxiety is agreeably disappointed with the harvest. And this is invariably the case with the children of God. They are often in pain and sorrow; but when these are undergone for righteousness' sake, they must be followed by a harvest of joy, which shall be a hundredfold compensation. Let the Christian not count as lost the seeds he sows, or the tears in which he steepens them. But let all such rest on that word *doubtless*, which is God's guarantee" (Meyer).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

126.6. *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him.* Many of the people are ground down by the Government, and are so poor that they live at the best of times from hand to mouth; and "in seasons of great scarcity, they part in sorrow and anxiety with every measure of precious seed cast into the ground, for it is like taking bread out of the mouths of their starving children, and bitter tears at such times are shed." In allusion to these sadly familiar scenes in the Holy Land, the Psalmist speaks of those "that sow in tears"; and represents them as sustained during this trial by the anticipated joy of harvest; for "They shall reap with triumphant singing (*rinnah*) . . . He shall surely come in with triumphant singing (*rinnah*), bearing his sheaves." I think there is every reason to believe that this *rinnah* is that mode of rejoicing when for a long time they go on singing in chorus: "*Hey aman, 'Allah Aman; hey aman, ouroodo kaman,*" "O amen, God is amen; O amen, and repeat it again," to the accompaniment of a rhythmic clapping of hands, a characteristic oriental feature of great rejoicing. (Ps. 126.5, 6).—James Neil, in "Everyday Life in the Holy Land."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. By whom had Jerusalem been captured? Who was king of Judah at this time? What happened to him? What was done to the walls? To the city? What was done with most of the people? What class of men were allowed to remain?

The Situation in Judah during the Exile. The Samaritans pushed southward. The Edomites drew in upon the Negeb. Ammonites and Moabites doubtless took their shares; and the desert nomads, always hovering upon the borders of cultivation and even in times of peace encamped across its pastures, would take advantage of the exile as they have done of every similar one to settle down in deserted fields and buildings. Yet the fact persists, that upon a much diminished territory some scores of thousands of Jews remained in Judah through all the period of the Exile. They were "the poorest

of the land," from whom every man of substance and of energy had been sifted; mere groups of peasants without a leader and without a center; disorganized and depressed; bitten by hunger and compassed by enemies; uneducated and an easy prey to the heathenism by which they were surrounded. We can appreciate the silence which reigns in the Bible regarding them, and which has misled us as to their numbers. They were a negligible quantity in the religious future of Israel: without initiative or any influence except that of a dead weight upon the efforts of the rebuilders of the nation when these at last returned from Babylonia.—Dr. George Adam Smith, in "Jerusalem."

After the Return from Babylon. Two generations of Jews in exile had dreamed of the return. Jerusalem and the land had appeared to them glorified, the life had been idealized. The pioneers of the return were disillusioned; they found desolation everywhere, the land was barren, Jerusalem was in ruins, the neighboring people were hostile. Those early days were days of intense discouragement which threatened to overwhelm them.

The Background of the Eighty-fifth Psalm. The Psalms are the great hymns which the people sang in their temple-worship, and some of our best-loved hymns are but variations of them. They are "the songs of the heart," the expressions of actual experiences, voicing humility and confession, thanksgiving and praise, fear and hope, anxieties and aspirations and triumph—all the deep and bitter and sweet experiences of life.

The Eighty-fifth Psalm was evidently written soon after the return to Jerusalem of some of the exiles from Babylon. It voices first the exultation which the people had felt at the prospect of return; then the depression caused by the actual condition of affairs, the difficulties and hardships; and finally the assurance of help and blessings that came as they waited on God.

The Background of the One-hundred-and-twenty-sixth Psalm. Here two different moods are voiced: the exultant joy of deliverance from captivity, and anxiety as to the future; like Psalm 85, this Psalm befits the situation after the return from exile.

Jerusalem as It Appeared to the Returning Exiles. When the army of Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem the city was sacked and burned. The walls round about were broken down, the Temple, the king's palace, and "every great house," were burned, and the whole city was left in ruins. The treasures of the Temple were carried to Babylon. While some of the Jews that remained in the land may have dwelt in the city, their wretched homes could only have made the holy city seem more desolate still to the returning Jews who had heard such glowing accounts of its beauty and grandeur.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him." What countless multitudes these words have strengthened and encouraged and cheered! All through the ages they have enabled men to persevere in their work for God in the face of tremendous discouragements. When he wrote these words the Psalmist himself could have little realized the accumulation of sheaves that would spring from his seed-sowing. The teacher as a sower of seed may not always see the harvest, but he may confidently expect that his sowing will not be in vain. And he will have greater joy in the sowing if he has learned to do it well. Much of the unhappiness of teaching is due to the teacher's own consciousness of not doing it well. "Here is the way out," says Bishop William F. McDowell. "Your joy in your work would be immensely increased if by better preparation you were enabled to do your work better. By every means learn, for the Master's sake, to do it well. The Master of all good work will then reward you with the joy of doing it happily."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. (Begin by giving "The Historical Background" of these Psalms, and then read Dr. McFadyen's beautiful paraphrase of the Eighty-fifth Psalm; given below. Re-read the paraphrase, sentence by sentence, after each sentence asking your pupils to give the words of the Psalm which correspond to it.)

"Once, O our God, thou didst show favor to our land, by stilling thine anger against us, graciously forgiving our sins, and bringing thy people back from exile.

"Once again give over thine anger, and restore us; or wilt thou cherish thy wrath against us forever? O wilt thou not bring thy people back again from the gates of death, and make them glad in thee? Show us thy mercy, O our God, and save us!

"I tremble with expectancy to hear what answer the mighty Jehovah will make to my prayer. (Pause.) Now I know that it will be an answer of peace—peace to his loyal people that turn their hearts to him. Yes, assuredly, he will soon save those who fear him, and honor the land by his glorious presence. In the golden days so soon to dawn, men will be kind and loyal to each other, while from heaven salvation will look down upon them. Yes, faithfulness will spring up among men like golden harvest, and salvation will look down upon the happy earth from the windows of heaven. Jehovah will send his blessing, and his land will yield her harvest. He will pass through the land, attended by peace and salvation—salvation going as herald before him, and peace following in the track of his steps."

For Older Pupils. On the assembling of the second Parliament in 1656, Cromwell said that the day before he had been reading the Eighty-fifth Psalm and had found it "very instructive and significant," and then he told the members what was his hope for his nation. Why was this Psalm appropriate then? To what time in the history we are studying does it belong? What had been the recent experiences of the people?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL FORCES

Truth Springeth out of the Earth and Righteousness Hath Looked down from Heaven. How these two words, earth and heaven, represent the two great divisions of the thought of man! When you look abroad over a wide, open country, there are two parts of what you see; one, the green earth and its bright fields and somber forests, and rivers and lakes, with its trees and houses, fences and barns, and all the clear signs of man's activity; and the other, the blue sky, the birthplace of the winds, the home of sunlight and of stars, as mysterious and far away as the first one is close by and familiar. And as the horizon at once separates these two and joins them to each other, and he who watches stands between the two, between the heavens and the earth, and feels his one world made of the two together; so all man's thinking goes on between the natural and supernatural, between the simple, definite, familiar operations of practical life, the buying and selling, the building and delving and contriving, the social relationships and governmental operations which make the movement of the earth: and, on the other hand, the vague, unaccountable, transcendental influences which come out of the realm of unseen things, the regions where supernal beings live, the home to which the dead have gone, the House where God is as he is not here, the whole great universe which comes not to the knowledge of the eye or ear, but in which man believes by the subtler witness which it bears of itself directly to the soul.

And now the promise is that these two worlds are some day to come to perfect harmony and co-operation, and to conspire to influence the life of man.

Think what the promise that it gives us is. Think also what the limitations of that promise are. It says to every man who, trying to do right, has summoned to his aid all the best influences which this earthly life can furnish, and who has learned by sad experience to fear that they are not sufficient, that there are other influences which are trying to help him coming out of higher regions than this earth. "The heavens are helping you" it says. "The world of spirits is your ally. The unseen universe is on your side. In ways you cannot guess, with an intimacy of approach which you can never know, righteousness is looking down from heaven on your endeavor to be a righteous man." That is a splendid assurance. But see how very definite it is. It is all moral. It promises nothing but righteousness out of heaven.

Now, when I think how men have dealt with their belief in the unseen world,

I am struck by the thought that what they have mostly asked of that world has been something else than righteousness, and therefore does not fall within the lines of this great promise. Think of it! The old astrologers questioned the stars to know their fates. They waited and listened night after night to hear some message out of the sky, to tell them where they were to seek their fortunes, how long they were to live, and when they were to die. The modern Spiritualist tries to peer through the veil which separates the living from the dead, and what he mainly promises himself is consolation, some mitigation of the awful loneliness which fills his empty house. The Christian Scientist thinks he feels the whole air thrilling with power from the depths of the unseen, and it seems to be to him almost entirely the power of physical healing; he is to have his sickness cured. The great ghost-haunted world has rung with inquiries for the satisfaction of its curiosity, but certainly not with cravings for a purer life and a more steadfast strength against temptation. Wealth, comfort, health, knowledge, these are all good things, no doubt. If the unseen world can give them to us it is right that we should take them. But they are not the greatest things. Not one of them is absolutely necessary. Righteousness, goodness, strength of character, these are the only things which a true man must have, things which he cannot live without. And so I cannot help believing that a large part of man's questioning of the unseen world has been futile because he has not questioned it for the one thing which it was eager to bestow. He has asked it to make him rich, to give him consolation, to cure his sickness, and not above and before all other things to give him righteousness.—Condensed from "Natural and Spiritual Forces," by Phillips Brooks.

The Power is in God. It would greatly simplify matters if we could get hold of the idea that spiritual power is no other than the will of God streaming into us and becoming our will. All through the ages this Eternal Will has streamed into institutions and personalities. Now it has flashed out in prophetic illumination, now become the mover in some epoch-making reformation and now in some great religious awakening. Society has been lifted and purified just in proportion as it has opened itself to this stream of the Divine purpose. Every improvement in social conditions, every movement to elevate and save the masses, every endeavor to Christianize the heathen, every step of progress toward the brotherhood of man, has been caused by the instreaming of the will of God. These things are done by the push of the very forces that rule in the heart of the Eternal Father.

Go, for example, into a great mill or factory. At one end are the large engine and driving wheel. At the other end are scores, perhaps hundreds, of machines standing still. There is no lack of power in the engine, and no lack of willingness in the engineer to pass it along to the factory, but still the machines are motionless. What is the matter? Simply this: the great belt which transmits the power from the engine to the factory has not been slipped on. Let that be attended to and immediately every wheel begins to turn and something is done. Now spiritual power, as I understand it, is simply bolting my will on to the will of God. The man who does that most completely, who keeps the belt most tight so that the power lost through transmission is reduced to the minimum, is always the mightiest spiritual force. Most of us are weak because the belt is either off altogether, or so slack and loose that it carries very little of the power of the engine over into the factory.—Robert F. Coyle, in "The Church and the Times."

II THE GOODNESS OF GLADNESS

The Lord Has Done Great Things for Our Nation. This Eighty-fifth Psalm is called in the Revised Version a Prayer for God's Mercy upon the Nation. God's favor and mercy in the past are gratefully acknowledged, his pardon and help for the present are humbly sought, and his goodness and guidance in the future are joyously anticipated.

All the words of the Psalm are applicable to our nation, for which God has done such great things. In all our past history God's hand is most clearly seen; in our present life as a nation we need most urgently his pardon and quickening power; and in our outlook upon the future we can count most surely upon his goodness and guidance, if only we "turn not again to folly."

Then was Our Mouth Filled with Laughter. When Dan Crawford reached

England after an absence of twenty-five years in the heart of Africa a member of the cabinet said to him: "I would like your eyes. I would like to experience the surprise that you must be having in seeing the difference between twenty-five years ago and now. What is the biggest thing you have seen in the way of change?"

The missionary's answer must have surprised that cabinet member, for he said: "One of the greatest differences between now and twenty-five years ago that I notice is this: that modern materialism has robbed the modern young man of his smile. When I came into town the other morning in 'the tube,' there were thirteen young English sphinxes before me, with a strained, almost 'struggle-for-life' look on their faces. Twenty-five years ago I would have had before me thirteen genial, joyful Englishmen dissolving in smiles."

When Mr. Crawford told this conversation he compared a smile to the flag that floats over Buckingham Palace. When the flag floats the English people know the king is in the palace, Mr. Crawford's inference being that the continued absence of a smile from the face of the subjects of the King of Kings indicates that the latter no longer dwells in their hearts. As I heard him I could not help wondering if in his mind were not these words from our 126th Psalm:

Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing;
Then said they among the nations,
Jehovah hath done great things for them.

Saving a City by Laughter. It was in the year 1868, after a battle in the Spanish revolution of that year, and the streets of Madrid were filled with angry crowds that were bent on destroying everything and everyone. Suddenly an unknown man appeared at the City Hall.

"Give me a band of musicians," he said, "and before nightfall I shall control all Madrid."

He must have been a man of rare personality to have been able to persuade the authorities in that dark hour to give him anything. But he got the musicians, and went out with them to wander through the city. While they played, he sang—popular street songs, or some old national air. When these bored the listeners, he mounted old boxes and told funny tales. By nightfall peace reigned in the city, and the mob broke up and went home to bed. The man's name was Philippe Ducazel, and he was only twenty-two years old when he cleverly achieved this result.

We are told a great deal about heroic things in saving countries by long, terrible rides at night, or by the sacrifice of oneself by dying in somebody's stead, but few of us hear of anyone who saved a city by laughter.—"Youth's Companion."

Rejoice in the Lord. The chief characteristic of our modern life is its lack of joy. You see it in the literature of the day, in the pictures, the music, the poems, the novels, that express the artistic temper of the times. You see it in the faces of men and women on the streets. They are anxious, eager. They are hunting for something. What is it? Money, livelihood, luxury, influence, power? What do these mean? Surely in some sort, and in the last result, happiness. Evidently the game has escaped them all. And then there are those who tell us that the game is not worth the candle. They give it up. These are the pessimists and cynics of life, who go through the world vociferously shouting, or, more often, sit in their cushioned corner, sadly murmuring the question of the scoffer in the Psalm, "Who will show us any good?"

Let us bring this matter home to us. You believe in God, you say. You believe that Christ came to show you God's love, and teach you his truth, and bring you into conformity to his law and likeness. Well, a man may believe all this, or say he believes it, and yet God, in any deep and real sense, may be utterly wanting to his life. The apostles of Christ's religion believed this, and what was the result of it? You know the history, the circumstance and setting of their lives. They went forth to proclaim this faith to the world. It was a world something like that of today in its secular grandeur and pride of life and thirst for pleasure and want of joy. They were outcasts from all the comfort and happiness and honor that the world had to give. They were scorned and hunted to death. And what do you find in the writings that

they have left us? A strange thing, joy in life, joy in toil and suffering and ignominy.

Yes; the life of the world is joyless because it thrusts God from its thought. If our life be joyless, it is because we talk of God but fail to throw open the door of our heart so that the life of God may come in and possess us.

You know how a living spring gushes up from the earth. It does not depend on showers or the inflowing of rivulets. It is not fed from the surface. It has its sources deep down in the bosom of the rock. The joy of God, if his life be in your heart, is such a living spring. It rises from depths that nothing can exhaust. It deepens with its outflowing. It will not ebb away when you need it most. You can drink of it in the heat of battle and in the weary marches of the day and when you stand a lone sentinel in the storm and darkness of the night.

"Rejoice in the Lord," says Paul. He repeats the word "rejoice" as if this were the emphatic word. The life and religion of today need to ponder this reiterated command of the Christian apostle. Christ came to bring God's joy to men. Joy for evermore belongs to the sisterhood of Christian graces.—Condensed from "Interpretations of Life and Religion," by W. R. Battershall.

"The Jolly Book." Here is the lame lad's story of how he came to keep his "Jolly Book," as told by Eleanor H. Porter in "The Return of Pollyanna."

"I started it a year ago. I was feelin' 'specially bad that day. Nothin' was right. For a while I grumped it out, just thinkin', and then I picked up one of father's books and tried to read. And the first thing I see was this: I learned it afterwards, so I can say it now.

' Pleasures lie thickest where no pleasures seem;
There's not a leaf that falls upon the ground
But holds some joy, of silence or of sound.'

"Well, I was mad. I wished I could put the guy that wrote that in my place and see what kind of joy he'd find in my 'leaves.' I was so mad I made up my mind I'd prove he didn't know what he was talkin' about, so I began to hunt for 'em—the joys in my 'leaves,' you know. I took a little old empty notebook that Jerry had given me, and I said to myself that I'd write 'em down. Everythin' that had anythin' about it that I liked I'd put down in the book. Then I'd just show how many 'joys' I had. I didn't expect to get many, but—do you know?—I got a lot. There was somethin' about 'most everythin' that I liked a *little*, so in it had to go.' The very first one was the book itself—that I'd got it, you know, to write in. Then somebody give me a flower in a pot, and Jerry found a dandy book in the subway. After that it was really fun to hunt 'em out—I'd find 'em in such queer places, sometimes. Then one day Jerry got hold of the little notebook and found out what 'twas. Then he give it its name—the Jolly Book. And that's all."

Our Prayer. Father, I have sinned, in that I have been unhappy today. How could I be so miserable when all through the day thou didst uphold me with thy love and care? Forgive me, Lord, for thus dishonoring thee, and give me such a sense of what thou art to me that henceforth when I am unhappy for lack of anything, I may remember that I have thee and be satisfied. Amen.—Dr. Edward Leigh Pell.

III THEY THAT SOW IN TEARS SHALL REAP IN JOY

**Righteousness shall go before him,
And shall make his footsteps a way to walk in.**

We do not know the future; but God knows it, and he goes before the race to prepare and to adjust, from one stage to another, until he shall bring us all to that far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. We find an illustration of it in the wonderful manner in which this world was prepared for human habitation. From the very beginning God went before us in a pillar of cloud. "Darkness was upon the face of the earth," but in that darkness dwelt the Creative Spirit, ordering, balancing, and fashioning the rude elements into order and beauty, until at last the earth was fit to become the home of the children of men. The Eternal Spirit preceded the race, and when we arrived the darkness had vanished; even the flowers had been planted, and a superb palace had been prepared for us. As the race goes on everything that is needed

for our maintenance, everything that is needed for our raiment, everything that is needed for our delectation, unfolds itself along the ages, showing that this is not a chaotic sphere, but God has gone before us and prepared the pathway for the race.

Our scientists tell us that Nature is full of prophecy. "If you only look you will see the face of Spring behind the mask of Autumn." "If you look at the trees today you will see the buds of next year upon them." "The butterflies of next summer," says Richard Jefferies, "are somewhere under the snow." Nature has always its eye on tomorrow. The future may seem as a blank to you, but in the mind of God the tree is determined in the acorn.

There is another great truth—the marvelous way in which God has gone before us in respect of our moral necessities. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. God has gone before us anticipating our sins and providing a great salvation. When the gate of Paradise was shut upon us, Christ, a grander door, was opening into a grander world.

Finally, a future life is being prepared for us. "I go to prepare a place for you." There is the supreme forerunner. Christ has entered within the veil and taken possession of the world to come. Some people are greatly perplexed about the future life; but all the problems of the future life have been solved by the fact that we are here and that this world was here before us. We have seen the miracle performed. A world was prepared for man, and we have taken possession of it. Where is the mystery of the future? He shall open to us another world. "Ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward." He who called us out of the unknown into a great existence like this can surely repeat the operation; he who can call the caterpillar into the butterfly, can call us to a life beyond death. He will. He has gone before us.—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Just Ahead is a Glad Surprise. "I like to go through tunnels," said the child who sat by my side as we plunged into the black hole in the mountain-side, "'Cause I'm always so s'prised when we come out." When we "came out" that time, it was indeed a surprise, for the beauty of the scene sent a hush over all the passengers. Amid the noise and smoke and darkness of the tunnel no one could imagine such a picture as this.

Perhaps, after all, that is what tunnels are for, I found myself thinking—that the joy of a glad surprise may be ours when we come out. If only we could remember how often after life's darkest and hardest experiences the light and hope of days we thought never would come again have been ours, it would help us to endure patiently the tunnels into which we are plunged so suddenly in our journey through the world.

Earth can offer no road by which one may avoid all tunnels. No matter how I choose to cross my own country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, I shall encounter tunnels, and I can remember now that the most wonderful scenes that have impressed themselves upon my memory, never to be forgotten, have been those just the other side of tunnels. So I must teach my heart not to fear life's dark places but to endure their hardships and trial with courage, keeping my mind fixed upon what I shall find when I come out. If I can do this then even the last and darkest tunnel of all into which I must plunge at the end of life will have lost its terrors for me, for I shall be able to think with confidence of the eternal life and light, freedom and joy that shall be mine. And for my comfort I may remember that the engineer is always present with his train as it rushes into the darkness. His hand never leaves the throttle nor his eyes the track. His mind is fixed upon the safety of those he is taking through, and I trust him. If I did not trust him, a journey would be a series of fears that would rob me of all pleasure and fill my soul with terror. But I do trust him, and how much more may I trust the great Engineer whose hand is upon my life and whose all-seeing eye knows the track over which it must go, the tunnels through which it must pass to reach the journey's end in safety.

May God help us as we go through life's tunnels to be conscious of his presence with us, confident that just ahead is a glad surprise to greet us when we come out again into the light.—Miss Margaret Slattery, in "The Home Department Magazine."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Ps. 85.1. What we need is a profound faith in God's ruling all things.—Gordon.

Ps. 85.2. God covers sin, but man must not cover sin before God.—Perowne.

Ps. 85.10. Thankfulness is the other side of mercy.—Dr. Van Dyke.

Ps. 126.2. The prayer of faith must be a prayer of thanksgiving, because faith knows how much it owes to God.—Robert Rainy.

Ps. 126.2. Some people are burdened by trying to bear a religion which ought to bear them; they have the commandment without the dynamic, the statute without the song.—Dr. Jowett.

Ps. 126.3. No human being hath devised nor hath any human mind worked out these great things: they are the gracious gifts of the most high God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.—Lincoln.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The returned exiles were not satisfied with their relationship to God. They knew that they were guilty of sins of commission and begged for Divine mercy and pardon; and they knew also that they were guilty of sins of omission and asked to be quickened, revived. Both prayers we need to offer.

Let us include in our prayers this week these petitions: that the spirit of penitence and of gratitude may be ours; that the name of Jesus, in whom mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, are embodied, may be honored in our home; that God's will may be done in our community; that righteousness and peace may reign in our land and in all lands.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Natural and spiritual forces. See the First Topic; "The Outlook," March 8, 1913, p. 524.
2. The Golden Text. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What had Jeremiah prophesied about the return? (Jer. 29.10.) 2. What prophet mentions Cyrus in connection with the return? (Isa. 44.28.) 3. What are the dates of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the return from exile? (*Guide*, p. 370.) 4. What became of the descendants of the exiles who remained in Babylonia? 5. What good did the exile do the people? (*Guide*, p. 376.) 6. Give a brief account of the kings of the Chaldean Dynasty. (*Guide*, p. 372.) 7. What can you learn about Cyrus? (*Guide*, p. 373; *Encyclopædias*.) 8. What was "the first year of Cyrus King of Persia"? (*Guide*, p. 373.) 9. Why is he called "king of Persia"? (*Guide*, p. 370.) 10. Who was Sheshbazzar? (*Guide*, p. 371.) 11. Describe the route followed. (*Guide*, p. 373.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Cyrus permit the exiles to return? (*Guide*, p. 374.) 2. Why did some of them return? 3. Why did some remain? (*Guide*, p. 373.) 4. How does God "stir up the spirit" of men today? 5. How may Cyrus' words in verse 2 be explained? (*Guide*, p. 371.) 6. What was "the house of the Lord"? 7. What had become of the Temple built by Solomon? 8. Explain the figure of speech in verse 6. (*Guide*, p. 371.) 9. What is indicated by the giving of the long list of Temple treasures restored? (*Guide*, p. 371.) 10. Can you understand the wealthy man who said, "The habit of my life has been to acquire; you do not know how hard it is for me to give"?

Questions upon the Book of Ezra. 1. Who wrote it? 2. What part is in Aramaic? 3. What similarities are there between Ezra and Chronicles? 4. When was Ezra written? 5. What do we know about Ezra the scribe? 6. What history does the book record? 7. What do you think of it as a work of literature? 8. What lesson has it for today? (Answers to these questions may be found on pp. 33 and 34 of our Introduction.)

RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY

Golden Text

Jehovah hath done great things for us; Whereof we are glad. Psalm 126.3

LESSON Ezra 1.1-11 MEMORIZE verses 2, 3

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.

5 Then rose up the heads of fathers' *houses* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem. 6 And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered. 7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put in the house of his gods; 8 even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. 9 And this is the number of them: thirty platters of gold, a thousand platters of silver, nine and twenty knives, 10 thirty bowls of gold, silver bowls of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Proclamation of Cyrus, 1-4.
- II. The Response to the Proclamation, 5-11.

1. These words are also in 2 Ch. 36.22, 23: see our Introduction, p. 34.—*In the first year of Cyrus.* In the year that Cyrus captured Babylon and ruled over the Babylonian Empire, 538 B.C. See "The Historical Background."—*That the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished.* The prophet Jeremiah had declared that the exile would last seventy years, Jer. 29.10. From the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. to the return in 538 B.C. was about fifty years, but exactly seventy years intervened between the destruction of the Temple and its restoration, 586 to 516 B.C.—*Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus.*

"We cannot think a gracious thought,
We cannot feel a good desire,
Till thou, who call'dst a world from naught,
The power in our hearts inspire."

See the First Topic.—*King of Persia.* Cyrus was of Persian descent and Persia was the most important of his conquests.—*He made a proclamation.* By a herald. The full text of the proclamation is recorded in Ezra 6.3-5.—

Throughout all his kingdom. Josephus says the proclamation was sent as far as Media.—*Put it also in writing.* His written proclamation sent to officials throughout his empire.

2. *All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me.* It was the policy of Cyrus to be known as favored by the gods of every people. See below.—*He hath charged me.* See Isa. 44:28; 45:1, 12, 13.—*To build.* By allowing the Jews themselves to build, verse 3.—*A house.* The Temple.

3. *Among you.* Among all the people of his kingdom.—(*He is God*), which is in Jerusalem. Or, *He is the God who is in Jerusalem*, RVm.

4. *Whosoever is left in any place where he sojourneth.* Ryle gives this paraphrase: "In any place where survivors of the Jewish captivity are to be found sojourning."—*The men of his place.* The native Babylonians, as well as Jews.—*The freewill-offering.* The voluntary gift.

5. *The heads of fathers' houses.* Hereditary rulers of the tribes. See Josh. 7:16-18.—*Of Judah and Benjamin.* There were also some from Ephraim and Manasseh, 1 Ch. 9:3.—*Whose spirit God had stirred.* The majority of the Jews preferred to remain in the land of their exile.

6. *Strengthened their hands.* "The idea is that of 'grasping,' 'laying hold on the hand with the view of strengthening or supporting.' The Jews who sought to return were like a convalescent essaying to walk and needing assistance."

7. *Which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem.* They had been taken to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiachin, 2 Ch. 36:7.—*And had put in the house of his gods.* An inscription has been found in which he declares that the aim of his conquests was to glorify his gods and to secure the means to rebuild and adorn their temples.

8. *Mithredath.* "The Hebrew form of the old Persian name Mithradates."—*Numbered them unto.* Counted them out to.—*Sheshbazzar.* Probably this was the name by which this man was known at court, and Zerubbabel, 2:2, was his name among his own people. The foundation of the Temple is ascribed to both, 5:16; 3:8. "Some regard Sheshbazzar as identical with Shenazzar the uncle of Zerubbabel (2 Ch. 3:18, 19), or take him to be a Persian commissioner accompanying Zerubbabel (for although he is here called the prince of Judah, i.e., the representative of Judah's royal line, the Septuagint styles him 'the guardian over the treasure,' or 'treasury')."

9. *And this is the number of them.* "Is not this dry enumeration a strange item to come in the forefront of the narrative of such an event? We might have expected some kind of production of the enthusiasm of the returning exiles, some account of how they were sent on their journey, something which we should have felt worthier of the occasion than a list of bowls and nine and twenty knives. But it is of a piece with the whole of the first part of this Book of Ezra, which is mostly taken up with a similar catalogue of the members of the expedition. The list here indicates the pride and joy with which the long hidden and often desecrated vessels were received. We can see the priests and Levites gazing at them as they were brought forth, their hearts, and perhaps their eyes, filling with sacred memories. The Lord had 'turned again the captivity of Zion' and these sacred vessels lay there, glittering before them, to assure them that they were not as 'them that dream.' Small things become great when they are the witnesses of a great thing. It is almost within the lifetime of living men that all Scotland was thrilled with emotion, by the discovery, in a neglected chamber, of a chest in which lay, forgotten, the crown and scepter of the Stuarts. A like wave of feeling passed over the exiles as they had given back to their custody these Temple vessels" (MacLaren).

10. *Bowls.* "Vessels provided with covers or lids" (Ryle).

11. *All the vessels . . . five thousand and four hundred.* Those mentioned in the preceding verses total 2499. Whether some vessels were omitted from the itemized list, or whether some of the figures have been wrongly copied, does not matter.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me.* Cyrus was the worshiper of many gods; he was ready to worship Jehovah the God of the Jews just as he was to worship the many gods of the Baby-

Ionians. His special god was Marduk, as his cylinder inscription shows. Here is the translation: "Marduk, the great god of the Babylonians, searched through all lands, he saw him, and he sought the righteous prince after his own heart, whom he took by the hand. Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called by name, to sovereignty over the whole world he appointed him. . . . May all the gods whom I brought into their own cities daily before Bel and Nabu pray that I may have a long life, may they speak a gracious word for me, and may they say to Marduk, my lord, 'Cyrus, the king who worships thee, and Cambyses his son.'"

2. *He hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem.* As recent discovery of papyri on the island of Elephantine opposite the town of Assuan in Egypt proves, at the time of the events of this lesson there was a Jewish colony settled there whose temple was destroyed by the Egyptians. A letter of 408 B.C. beginning: "To our master Bagoas, governor of the Jews. Thy servants Jedoniah and associates, priests in the city of Elephantine"—asks help in these words: "If our master thinketh well to build this Temple seeing they permit us not to build it, lo, unto thy friends and clients which are here in Egypt let a letter be sent from thee concerning the temple of the God Jahu (Jehovah) in the city of Elephantine to build it even as it was before." Another papyrus contains the answer of Bagoas: "Thou shalt say in Egypt before Arsames (the governor) concerning the altar-house of the God of Heaven, which was built before our time, before Cambyses, in Elephantine, which Vidrang . . . destroyed in the fourteenth year of King Darius, that it is to be rebuilt in its place as it was before, and that meat-offerings and frankincense shall be offered upon this altar, as was done formerly."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What were the reasons for the exile? By whom was Jerusalem taken? When? What was done to the Temple? What was done with the furnishings of the Temple? Who was Cyrus? When did he reign? What light do the Psalms of our last lesson throw upon the moods of the returning exiles? What did Paul say to the Corinthians about the grace of giving (a lesson of last year)?



Symbolic Figure of Cyrus. At the Base his Name is Given in Cuneiform Characters.

The Chaldean Dynasty. The Chaldean Dynasty in Babylon was short-lived, only eighty-eight years in all. Nebuchadnezzar died in 561 B.C., and left his great, well-organized empire to his weak son Evil-Merodach. (From 2 K. 25.27-30 we learn this king freed Jehoiachin after an imprisonment of 37 years, and gave him a place at the royal table.) After a reign of two years Evil-Merodach was murdered by one of his officers, Nergalsharuzur, or Nergalsharezer as he is called in Jer. 39.3, who commanded Nebuchadnezzar's army at the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. Though he prayed to his god Marduk for a long life and a stable throne, he lived only four years. Nine months after his young son Labashi-Marduk became king, some of the nobles formed a conspiracy, murdered the king, and placed Nabonidus, one of their own number, on the throne. Nabonidus strengthened the wall of Babylon along the Euphrates, for danger threatened from the north, but his great interest centered in restoring and adorning the temples of the gods. Because he did more for the old Babylonian and Assyrian gods than for the favorite gods of the people—Marduk, Bel, and Nebo—his people grew to hate him, especially after he left his capital for Tema and the great religious feasts could no longer be observed at Babylon without the presence of the king.

Cyrus the Great. Meanwhile Cyrus was acquiring his title of the Great. In 559 B.C. he was king of Anshan, the native name of the little state among the mountains northeast of Babylon, which the Assyrians and Hebrews called Elam. In 549 B.C. he made himself master of Media; by 546 B.C. he had acquired the title of king of Persia. Next he extended his empire westward to the Aegean Sea. In 538 B.C. he captured Nabonidus and Babylon, and adopted the title of "King of Babylon and King of Countries." He was, in truth, master of all the world then worth having, with the exception of Egypt.

For his policy in regard to the Jews, see ¶ 6, p. 374.

The Jews Who Remained in Exile and their Descendants. The return to Palestine meant a hard journey; it meant that they must abandon their newly-acquired homes and the rich, well-watered gardens for the hills and an uncertain existence in Jerusalem. The city and the Temple were the only attractions of their abandoned country, and while the most devout, guided by the religious leaders, returned, the greater part remained.

The latter increased in numbers and flourished. They established schools; they studied and revised their laws; they collected their traditions with greater zeal than ever before, and added new books to their literature. Occasionally, with the wealth which they accumulated, they performed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and while on the way bewailed their exile, more as a matter of custom than of heart. The great leaders—Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel—preached the return; still the Jew clung to his exile and to Babylonia.

During the first century of our era, two Jewish brothers—Asinai and Anilai—the leaders of a large Jewish community at Neherda, north of Babylon, became powerful, and with a bravery displayed a few centuries earlier by the Maccabees, established an independent Jewish state. There the chief of the captives, the Resh Galutha, the position first occupied by Ezekiel, resided, and thither the Jews, still mourning the exile from which they would not return, flocked for consolation and advice.

The descendants of the exiles still inhabit every part of Babylonia. Of the one hundred thousand population of Bagdad, forty thousand are Jews. In the town of Hillah, upon the site of Babylon, there are probably as many Jews as Arabs. In the sacred cities of Meshed, places almost inaccessible to the non-Moslem, are now a few Jewish families. In the malarial marshes of lower Mesopotamia, far from other habitation, I have found Jewish families living alone, cultivating their rice-fields as in the days of the exile. In general, the modern Bagdad Jew, ground down by oppression, is an ignorant, loathsome creature. While forgetting much of the good of his own religion and traditions, he has adopted much of the superstition of the Arabs.—Edgar James Banks, in "The Sunday School Times."

The Book of Ezra. See pp. 33, 34 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The great caravan would scarcely have taken the direct route across the desert to Damascus. They probably traveled up the Euphrates River Valley, along the route which was afterwards called "The Royal Road," up to the ancient city of Haran, Abraham's resting-place, and then westward across the river at the ford of Carchemish. From there they went southward by the way of Aleppo and Hamath to Damascus and on till they reached the ruined city of Jerusalem. See the two routes indicated on our large colored map. The similar journey of Ezra's caravan required four months, as we know from Ezra 7, 8, 9.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It is part of a teacher's privilege to develop in his pupils the will to give, to increase their desire to share. An opportunity such as this lesson affords should not be lost. One of the best methods is the unobtrusive one of introducing into your lesson treatment incidents from mission fields such as that given on page 375. Instances in which foreign converts far outstrip ourselves in generous, even sacrificial giving, are many, and a knowledge of what such devoted Christians are doing cannot help having its effect upon those not generously inclined.

In one Sunday-school the following plan has been tried with great success. The treasurer gives the report of the offerings for each class by coins, stating

the number of quarters, of dimes, of nickels, and of cents. The penny classes have disappeared.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Question your pupils about the release from the captivity of Egypt, bringing out the trouble the Hebrews had in getting away from Pharaoh. Recall how they "asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked." Then contrast with that exodus this of the Jews from Babylon under Cyrus, with his freely granted permission, his wide-spread proclamation, his bidding the people help those who returned with silver and gold and goods and beasts as well as free-will offerings for the Temple.

For Older Pupils. Last week we had a glimpse of the joy and the sorrow which the return to Jerusalem brought to those Jews who had lived in Babylon, the descendants of those who had been exiled to Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Let us see what have been the fortunes of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I HOW GOD WORKS

Through a Heathen King. Nothing seemed more unlikely than that the exile of his people should be terminated by such a movement on God's part. The influencing of a heathen king toward the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem could never have entered into the wildest dreams of the banished race. And yet it was this unlikely thing that happened. Apparently, without any external circumstances to account for the creation of his interest, Cyrus was directly moved by the Spirit of God. Under this constraint he issued the proclamation which freed the people of God to return to their own land, and at the same time secured for them all the material assistance needed for the rebuilding of his House. Nothing is more striking in their history than this direct intervention of God by the use of a man who could not be regarded as having any natural sympathy with his cause.

God's use of unlikely instruments is one of the facts of the Christian life which at once challenges and confirms the faith of his servants. Confronted as they are with tasks entirely beyond the reach of their own resources, they are compelled to look to him alone to open closed doors and beat down strong opposition. And this is the history of many an enterprise of the Kingdom, and in particular of its missionary extension. For he is the God of all power, and holds the key of every situation. Nothing so effectually strengthens the faith of his people as thus to see him working on their behalf in a manner which leaves no doubt as to the identity of the worker.—J. Stuart Holden.

Human and Divine Forces at Work. And what was Cyrus' own motive in allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple? This permission was a part of his policy as king. His predecessors on the throne of Babylon had deemed it wise to deport conquered peoples to Babylonia and fill their places with imported people: Cyrus deemed the opposite a wise procedure, and he gained the good-will of his subjects by his generous dealings with them. Moreover, though he had made himself master of Western Asia, he still had the conquest of Egypt in view: he was far-sighted and must have recognized that a grateful people dwelling in Judea, the province bordering on Egypt, and the one which must be the basis of a campaign against the land of the Pharaohs, would be of great service to him.

How, then, can the sacred historian say that Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus? Dr. Maclaren answers: "The historian digs deeper to find the true cause. Cyrus was God's instrument, and the statesman's insight was the result of God's illumination. The divine causality moves men, when they move themselves. It was not only in the history of the chosen people that God's purpose is wrought out by more or less conscious and willing instruments. The principle laid down by the writer of the Book of Ezra is of universal application, and the true 'philosophy of history' must recognize as underlying all other so-called causes and forces the one uncaused Cause, of whose purposes kings and politicians are the executants, even while they freely act according to their

own judgments, and, it may be, in utter unconsciousness of him. It concerns our tranquillity and hopefulness, in the contemplation of the bewildering maze and often heart-breaking tragedy of mundane affairs, to hold fast by the conviction that God's unseen hand moves the pieces on the board and presides over all the complications. Would that all politicians recognized the fact as clearly as this historian did!"

II STRENGTHENING THE HANDS OF OTHERS

They Strengthened Their Hands. King Cyrus granted no sum of money and levied no tax for the expense of his subjects' return to Judea; he merely counseled the people to help them with silver and gold. Neighborly goodwill was shown everywhere, for "all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things." The Jews who remained in the land of their captivity had a share in the work of the restoration of the Temple and its worship at Jerusalem, as well as those who returned and did the work.

"I don't see you," said a father when his son proudly brought home a group picture in which he claimed to be represented. "Why, you see that big, fat boy there, don't you, father? Well, I am right behind him!" The Jews who remained occupied a similar position; they were right behind the prominent ones in the picture, but it was their assistance that made possible the return of their more stout-hearted and religious brothers.

The invisible position behind the active worker does not seem so glorious, but it is usually equally essential. Dr. Watkinson uses for another purpose an illustration which is pertinent here. In the valley of Chamouni at the foot of Mont Blanc there is a notable monument. It represents two figures, the splendid representation of Saussure, the great scientist, and by his side the image of Balmat, the guide. Saussure was a great thinker; Balmat was a poor peasant. But Saussure would never have scaled Mont Blanc if Balmat had not shown him the way; and so the people, with a fine instinct, put them both on the monument—the great philosopher and the little peasant—for together they gave to mankind a new world of science and of romance. The obscure helper does not often get on the monument; but he deserves the position.

The Right Spirit. In Ceylon Dr. John R. Mott found a band of students so poor that sixteen of them occupied one room. Near the building was a banana plantation to the cultivation of which these youths devoted all their spare time.

"What do you boys do with the money that you earn from this fruit enterprise?" inquired Dr. Mott.

For answer, they took him down to the beach and pointed to an island far out at sea on the horizon. "Two years ago," they explained, "we sent one of our graduates there. He started a school, which has since developed into a church. We are going to send him to another island this year."

The Habit of Strengthening the Hands of Others Should Grow. Ex-President Taft believes that the thirty million dollars contributed annually in the United States and England to foreign missionaries only serves to increase the amount given to home missions and charity. "Why, here I'm a case in point," he said in discussing the matter. "This morning I gave a check to the Yale Mission in China, and this afternoon I made out a check for the same amount to the organized charities of New Haven. It was not a large sum but I don't think I would have given as much to the latter if I hadn't felt it my duty to do as well by it as I had done by the first. The one enlarged the gift of the other."

Unfortunately Mr. Taft's method oftentimes is not the prevailing method. The "New York Evening Post" has this word to say to those not so inclined:

"If you are unwilling to give more in this year of wrath and desolation than you give when all's well with the world, if your help to the sufferers in Belgium, or Serbia, or Poland, is to be imposed as a sacrifice upon the poor whom you have been in the habit of helping more or less at home, by all means let your charity stop where it begins, at home. But it is a monstrous idea that under no circumstances shall a man trench upon what he has been accustomed to devote to his own spendings or his own savings, and that any new call for his aid, however tragic, however overwhelming and urgent, must be met, if

met at all, at the expense of the little fund which in ordinary times he devotes to charitable purposes."

III THE RETURN FROM EXILE

The Spirit of Those Homeward Bound. The exile was a blessing considerably disguised at first, but in the end gratefully acknowledged. It was a nation that was carried into captivity, but a Church that returned; the Jewish Church took the place of the Hebrew People. When they went into exile, the great majority could scarcely be distinguished from their heathen neighbors. They were indeed sifted during the exile, and those who returned were passionately loyal to Jehovah. As Dr. Maclaren expresses it, colors burned in on china are permanent, and the furnace of bondage had, at least, effected this, that it fixed monotheism forever in the inmost substance of the Jewish people.

The exile effected more. The people who returned were under the guidance of priests, and they went back for the express purpose of rebuilding the Temple and restoring worship there in accordance with their ritual. They acknowledged that the sins of their nation had merited the punishment of exile, and they eagerly desired reconciliation with Jehovah. "They went out without a national knowledge of the Law, and they returned with a passion for the Law which redeems the commonplaces of their life with vast sublimities."

Moreover, their conception of Jehovah was different on their return. Where formerly they had thought of him mainly as the God of Israel, the God of Canaan alone, they now knew him to be God of the universe. Professor Kent explains this: "Absorbed among races more powerful and more highly civilized than they, the Jews were forced to admit that they were only one of the weak families of the earth. The experience was painful but valuable. It not only broadened their conception of Jehovah's character, but also led them to recognize their complete dependence upon him. They saw for the first time that they were unique among nations simply because of their unique relation to the God of the universe. Their attitude changed toward the great heathen world about them. No longer could they ignore their neighbors, or merely consider them when they disturbed the peace of Israel. Beginning with the period of the exile, the nations figure prominently in the utterances of the prophets. From the same epoch dates the rise of a broad religious philosophy of history. The nations, drawn together by force, began dimly to recognize that they belonged to one family; while certain inspired Jews grasped the greater truth that one Father stood at the head of that family, and that Cyrus was Jehovah's anointed as truly as was Jehoiachin. The exile proved, as Amos predicted (Am. 9.9), a sifting process, for it effectually separated the faint-hearted and sceptical from the brave and true. Many—perhaps the majority—were found wanting; but those who endured the ordeal and remained faithful were devoted to the worship of the Jehovah of the prophets with a passionate zeal, which was in striking contrast to the popular indifference that daunted pre-exilic prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah. Bound together, not by political bands, but by common suffering and the common faith, the royal few proved the nucleus out of which, during the succeeding centuries, grew the Jewish church."

Is the Time for the Return of the Jews to Palestine at Hand? At this writing it is impossible to forecast what will be the result of the great European War. Mr. Israel Zangwill, writing on "The War and the Jews," shows how a new hope fills the minds of modern Zionists. Referring to the forced exodus of Jews from Palestine to Egypt, he says: "If the cause of Zionism has thus received a serious set-back, if the heroic work of the colonists for a whole generation seems undone, if the old Jewish exodus from Egypt to Palestine has been reversed after three thousand years by this great exodus from Palestine to Egypt, the new exodus has produced a strange dramatic episode, which may bring Zionism nearer than ever to its hope."

The Christian's Exile and Home-Coming. On the Island of Guernsey visitors are shown the house occupied by Victor Hugo during his banishment from France. He calls it in his dedication, "My present refuge and probably my future tomb." The house remains just as he left it, and very interesting are the mottoes and aphorisms in many unexpected places. Among them are: *L'Espoir est ma Force*—Hope is my strength; *A Deo, ad Deum*—From God to God; and *Life is an Exile*.

Seventy years was the allotted time of the Babylonian Exile; threescore

years and ten is the allotted time of Life's Exile. Victor Hugo looked forward to death as to a home-coming—such a home-coming as is expressed in this beautiful Scotch Song:

I am far frae my hame, an' I'm weary aftenwhiles,
For the langed-for hame-bringing, an' my Father's welcome smiles,
I'll ne'er be fu' content until my een do see
The gowden gates o' heaven, an' my ain countrie.

The earth is flecked wi' flowers, mony-tinted, fresh and gay;
The birdies warble blithely, for my Father made them sae;
But these sights an' these soun's will as naething be to me
When I hear the angels singing in my ain countrie.

I've his gude word o' promise that some gladsome day the King
To his ain royal palace his banished hame will bring
Wi' een an' wi' heart running ower we shall see
The King in his beauty an' oor ain countrie.

He's faith-fu' that hath promised, he'll surely coom again,
He'll keep his tryst wi' me, at what hour I dinna ken,
But he bids me still to wait, an' ready aye to be
To gang at ony moment to my ain countrie.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. Nothing is too great for anyone to do if it is conducted in partnership with the Eternal.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Verse 1. Almighty God has his plans and methods for human progress.—William McKinley.

Verse 4. Give until you feel it, and then give until you don't feel it.—Mary Lyon.

Verse 6. Give all thou canst: high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more.—Wordsworth.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Do you ask what you can do for God? Ask rather what God can do for others through you. Be alert to God's stirring of your heart.

Are we doing all we can to strengthen the hands of active workers in mission fields abroad and at home? Every year about twice as much money is spent in our country for chewing-gum and twenty-five times as much for confectionery, as for foreign missions.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Zionism. See "The Outlook," Jan. 5, 1916.
2. The effect of the Exile. See p. 376.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the first thing the Jews did on reaching Jerusalem? (Ezra 3.2.) 2. How many Jewish temples have been built upon the same site at Jerusalem, and what do we call each? (*Guide*, p. 381.) 3. What building now stands on this site? (*Guide*, p. 381.) 4. What led to the cessation of work upon Zerubbabel's Temple? 5. When was it resumed? (Ezra 4.24.) 6. What letter was sent about it to Darius? (Ezra 5.) 7. What was Darius' answer? (Ezra 6.) 8. When was the Temple completed? 9. How did the people "sing one to another" at the foundation-laying? (*Guide*, p. 379.) 10. Explain the origin of the feud between Jews and Samaritans. 11. Read the Book of Haggai.

Questions to Think About. 1. Who built the first Temple? 2. What had happened to that Temple? 3. When? 4. Why was the rebuilding of the Temple important? 5. Why were the old men sorrowful at the rebuilding of the Temple? 6. What reasons did the people have for rejoicing? 7. What are the ceremonies now at the laying of the corner-stone of a church? 8. What temple are we building? (1 Cor. 3.16.)

Note-Book Work. Write: "XIV: Returning from Captivity."

THE TEMPLE REBUILT AND DEDICATED

Golden Text

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Psalm 100.4

LESSON Ezra 3.8-13; 6.14-18 MEMORIZE Ezra 6.14, 15

3.8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem, and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of Jehovah. 9 Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad with their sons and their brethren the Levites. 10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel. 11 And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: 13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

6.14 And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. 17 And they offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Overseers Appointed for the Building of the Temple, 3.8-9.
- II. The Foundation of the Temple Laid, 3.10-13.
- III. The Temple Completed and Dedicated, 6.14-18.

8. *In the second year . . . in the second month.*—April-May of 536 B.C.—*Unto the house of God at Jerusalem.* The site of the temple. See Ezra 2.68—*Began . . . and appointed.* Began preparations for building by appointing. The commencement was made in this year 536, but the work seems to have been shortly afterwards suspended, and when it was resumed in 520 B. C. it was practically a beginning. See Ezra 5.2 and 6.15.—*Zerubbabel.* Whom Cyrus appointed governor; see explanation of the name Sheshbazzar, p. 371, and Haggai 1.14.—*Jeshua.* The high priest, Haggai 1.14.—*Jozadak.* Mentioned among those taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, 1 Ch. 6.15.—*Have the oversight of the work.* Or, *set forward the work*, RVm.

9. This verse names the Levites appointed.—*Jeshua*. Not the high priest of the last verse, but a Levite mentioned in 2.40.—*Together*. Heb. *as one*, RVm.

10. *The builders*. The workmen engaged by the Levites.—*They set the priests*. According to some MSS., *the priests stood*, RVm.—*In their apparel*. In their priestly robes described in Ex. 39.27-29.—*With trumpets*. See Num. 10.8.—*After the order of David*. See 1 Ch. 25.1-8; 16.4-6.

11. *They sang one to another*. They were probably divided into two choirs which sang alternately. "If the 118th Psalm was originally appropriated to this occasion, it is easy to see with what force the two choral companies must have replied, in strophe and antistrophe: 'Open to me the gates of righteousness,' 'This is the gate through which the righteous shall enter'; or must have welcomed the foundation stone which, after all difficulty and opposition, had at last been raised on the angle of the rocky platform; or have uttered the formula which afterwards (Mt. 21.9) became proverbial for all such popular celebrations: 'Hosanna! Save us!'"

"Blessed be whosoever cometh in the name of the Eternal.'" (Stanley).—*For he is good*. See 1 Ch. 16.34, and Jeremiah's prophecy, 33.10-11.—*For his lovingkindness endureth forever toward Israel*. This realization of the goodness and mercy of God runs through Psalms 106, 107, 118 and 136.

12. *The first house*. Solomon's Temple, which was destroyed about fifty years before this time.—*Wept with a loud voice*. They could not help weeping as they recalled the magnificent Temple which had stood there "in the good old days," and thinking of the hardships and poverty of the present, they could not think it possible for another Temple to be at all like the first, could scarcely believe that it was even worth while to build another. As Tennyson's words proclaim, "A sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things."—*Many shouted aloud for joy*. The younger men were hopeful and joyful.

13. *Could not discern*. The weeping and the shouting made a confused sound.

6.14. *Through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo*. These prophets had aroused the people to their work of rebuilding the temple, Ezra 5.1-2, and they continued to help along the work by their inspiring words.—*According to the decree of Cyrus*. As told in our last lesson.—*And Darius*. The Temple was finished in his reign, 6.15: read the entire chapter.—*And Artaxerxes king of Persia*. Artaxerxes reigned from 465 to 423, and could not have aided in the rebuilding of the Temple which was finished in 515.

According to Ezra 7.19, he gave vessels for the Temple service.

6.15. *The month Adar*. February-March.—*In the sixth year of Darius*. In 516 B.C. It had taken over four years to rebuild the Temple.

6.16. *The children of the captivity*. The returning exiles.

6.17. The sacrifices offered were small in comparison with the large number offered by Solomon at the dedication of the first Temple, 1 Kings 8.5, 63, but the people were now poor.—*For a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats*. Though members of the tribes only of Judah and Benjamin had returned, the Temple was regarded as the sanctuary of all twelve tribes.

6.18. *In their courses*. See 1 Ch. 23-26.—*As it is written in the book of Moses*. See Num. 3.8.



A Priest in His Apparel with
Trumpet

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *They gave money unto the masons*. The money may have been gold and silver; perhaps it was clay. Loftus unearthed at Warka about forty "small tablets of unbaked clay, covered on both sides with minute characters." They were in length from two inches to four and a half, and in breadth from one inch to three inches. They had on them the names of various kings (among

them that of Cyrus), and dates ranging from 626 to 525 B. C. Sir Henry Rawlinson examined the inscriptions and said: "The tablets seem to be notes issued by the government for the convenience of circulation, representing a certain value, which was always expressed in measures of weight, of gold or silver, and redeemable on presentation at the royal treasury." Loftus adds: "These tablets were, in point of fact, the equivalents of our own bank-notes, and prove that a system of artificial currency prevailed in Babylonia, and also in Persia at a very early age."—James M. Freeman, in "Bible Manners and Customs."

4.5 *Darius king of Persia.* Among the treasures of the British Museum is the cylinder seal of this king. On it is inscribed in the Old Persian, Scythian and Babylonian languages the words: "I am Darius the Great." It represents the king hunting lions "under the protecting presence of Ahurmazda, his god."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What did the woman of Samaria say to Jesus about the place where one should worship? What did you learn in that lesson about the origin of the hatred between Jews and Samaritans? Who gave the Jews permission to return to Judah? How did he help them? Why did many remain? Why did some return?

Four Main Groups of Jews after the Return. At the time of our lesson the Jews were located in four main groups: the exiles who remained in Babylonia, the remnant who returned to Judah, the hybrid population of Samaria, and the refugees in Egypt. About the fate of those who remained in Babylonia we heard last week, p. 373. The Jews who had fled to Egypt were probably quickly absorbed in the Gentile population there. Our lessons now follow the fortunes of the brave remnant who returned to Judah to rebuild at Jerusalem the Temple and to reestablish there the old-time worship.

The Erection of the Altar. After a short stay in the cities of Judea the returned exiles gathered at Jerusalem in the seventh month to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. The first concern of their leaders, Zerubbabel the governor and Jeshua the high priest, had been to rebuild the altar of the burnt offering, and there the offerings were sacrificed according to the law of Moses. Money was also contributed to pay the masons and carpenters, and furnish food and drink and oil to the men of Sidon and Tyre who brought cedar-trees from Lebanon to Joppa on the coast, whence they were carried to Jerusalem for the Temple.

The Foundation of the Temple Laid. In the spring following their return to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the governor, Jeshua the high priest, priests, Levites and people, began preparations for re-building the Temple by appointing the Levites over twenty years of age as overseers of the work. Then Jeshua, Kadmiel, the sons of Judah, and the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren, took charge of the workmen.

When the builders laid the foundations the priests in their official robes blew the trumpets and the Levites sounded the cymbals in praise of the Lord as had been done in the time of David the King, and with songs they gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "For he is good, for his loving-kindness endureth for ever toward Israel." And all the people shouted with joy because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, though many of the priests and Levites and others, the old men who had seen the first Temple, were overcome and wept so loudly that one could not distinguish the sounds of weeping and of shouting.

The Building Interrupted by the Opposition of the Samaritans. The Samaritans came and asked Zerubbabel and the chief men to permit them to join in the building of the Temple, claiming that they had worshipped the same God since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assyria. But Zerubbabel and the rest refused to let them help, for they alone would build the Temple and carry out the order of Cyrus king of Persia.

Who were the Samaritans? When the Assyrians conquered Samaria (2 K. 17.23-41), colonists from Babylonia were brought to Samaria to occupy the place of the deported Jews. Through intermarriage with the Jews who were allowed to remain, there was an admixture of Jewish blood in their descendants' veins, which gave them a certain kinship with the Jews—a fact which the latter in the time of Christ refused to admit. The Babylonians had found the land overrun by lions and other wild beasts, and they had besought the Assyrian

king Esarhaddon to send them an Israelitish priest to teach them how to worship "the God of the land," for they thought this affliction had come upon them through their failure to worship him. Their request was granted, and they added the worship of Jehovah to that of their many gods. Therefore they could say when they asked for a share in the work of rebuilding the Temple that they sought their God as the Jews did, and sacrificed unto him since the days of Esarhaddon.

The refusal so angered the "adversaries of Judah and Benjamin" that they resolved to prevent the Jews from building, and they succeeded in interrupting the work until the reign of Darius king of Persia, Ezra 4:1-5, 24.

The Building of the Temple Resumed in the Time of Darius. During this time of opposition the Jews were busy in preparing their new homes and restoring the ancient cities, starting farms and constructing roads, and they began to argue that God's time for restoring his house had not yet come. Then droughts came and crops were bad, tokens of God's displeasure they believed, and the preaching of their prophets Haggai and Zechariah aroused them from their indifference. "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your own ceiled houses, while this Temple lies in ruins?" questioned Haggai. "And Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and the spirit of the rest of the people, so that they came and worked on the Temple of Jehovah." See Ezra 5:1, 2, and Haggai 1.

The Opposition of Persian Officials. Persian officials of the Province beyond the River inquired by what authority the Jews were rebuilding the Temple and the walls of the city, but the work went on while these officers sent a report of the work to Darius and awaited an answer. After Darius had investigated the archives and found a record of the decree of Cyrus, he ordered these Persian officers to aid in the building of the Temple. See Ezra 5 and 6.

The Dedication of the Temple. Darius' order was carried out, and by the sixth year of his reign the Temple was completed and dedicated. The keeping of the Passover followed. "The second Temple became a center toward which the Jews scattered throughout the world could turn in reverence and hope, the symbol of racial and religious unity. In distant lands, and among strange people, the pious Jew could greet the coming festival with the sweet words, 'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of Jehovah.' Thus the worship was perpetuated and the highest religion kept its place until the Christ came to complete its revelation and to enlarge its mission. That being so, the work of these men was important for us; we who are so distant from them in time and so different in circumstances owe to them a deep debt of gratitude."

The Three Temples. Three Jewish temples were built upon the same site. The first one, Solomon's, was built in 967 B.C. and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C.; the second one, Zerubbabel's, was built in 516 B.C.; and in 30 B.C. the third, or Herod's reconstructed Temple, was begun. Herod's Temple was destroyed during the siege by the Romans in 70 A.D. In 136 A.D., the Emperor Hadrian dedicated a temple on the same site to Jupiter, and in 637 the present Mohammedan Mosque of Omar was built.

Zerubbabel's Temple. The little which we know about this second Temple is thus described by Dean Stanley. "If the measurements indicated in the decree of Cyrus were acted upon, the space which it covered and the height to which it rose were larger than the corresponding dimensions of its predecessor. It must have been in the absence of metal and carving that it was deemed so inferior to the First Temple. The Holy of Holies was empty. The ark, the cherubs, the tables of stone, the vase of manna, the rod of Aaron, were gone. The golden shields had vanished. Even the High Priest, though



Esarhaddon

he had recovered his official dress, had not been able to resume the breastplate with the oracular stones. Still, there was not lacking a certain splendor and solidity befitting the sanctuary of a people once so great, and of a religion once so self-contained. The High Priest and his family were well lodged, with guest chambers and store chambers on a large scale for the Temple furniture. The doors of the Temple were of gold. In three particulars the general arrangements differed from those of the ancient sanctuary. With the rigid jealousy which rendered this period hostile to all which approached the Canaanite worship, there were no more to be seen in the courts those beautiful clusters of palm, and olive, and cedar, which had furnished some of the most striking imagery of the poetry of the Monarchy, but which had also lent a shelter to the idolatrous rites that at times penetrated the sacred enclosure. 'No tree,' 'no grove,' we are told, 'was to be seen within the precincts.' Another feature characteristic of the period was the fortress tower built at the northwest corner of the sanctuary which, serving in the first instance as a residence of the Persian governor, became in later days the Tower of Antonia, from which, in like manner, the Roman garrison controlled the proud population of Jerusalem. Like to this was the sign of subjection to the Persian power preserved in the Eastern gate of the Temple, called the Gate of Susa, from its containing a representation of the Palace of the Persian capital. Thirdly, the court of the worshipers was divided for the first time into two compartments, of which the outer enclosure was known as the Court of the Gentiles or Heathens.—Dean Stanley, in "History of the Jewish Church."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Dr. Lyman Abbot recalls riding on a train past a city where all the houses had been recently destroyed by fire. One large, fine brick building stood out from the log houses and shanties in which most of the people seemed to be living, and he asked a friend what it was. "The school-house," he replied. "That, then, was saved from the fire?" "No, that has been rebuilt since." "They are laying the foundations of the new city broad and deep, and wise and well," said Dr. Abbott.

Some of the Jews had returned to their city which had been ruined by fire and neglect; they wanted to rebuild it wisely and well; what did they build first?

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I FOUNDATION-LAYING

Except the Lord Build the House They Labor in Vain that Build It. The words of Benjamin Franklin when the foundations of our great nation were laid are recalled by this story of the laying of the foundation of the second Temple. At the Convention held in 1787 to frame our Constitution, Franklin said: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence. To that kind Providence we owe the opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend, or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived a long time—eighty-one years—and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see that God governs in the affairs of man. And, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that 'except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this, and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall proceed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

Laying the Foundation of Character. "I've built a lot of houses in my day, and know a lot of folks," said the old foreman thoughtfully. "'Nd there's one thing that allers sets me thinkin'." Most of the folks I've built houses for seemed to forgit entirely thet there's two kinds of things to a house—things thet kin be easy changed, 'nd things thet can't. 'Nd when you look

at what else folks is building fer themselves besides houses—characters, 'nd lives, 'nd all that—they're jest as forgetful there, again, seems to me.

"There's the cellar of a house now: when thet's dug, and the foundation's laid, 'nd the house goin' up to the second floor, 'tain't much good to begin thinkin' how you'd really like that cellar to be. But thet's just the way some folks do. 'Now I come to think of it,' they say, 'this cellar isn't high enough. The winders don't give enough light nor air, 'nd there ain't no room for the furnace flues to rise 'nd the drains ought to run above ground, and not way under the cellar floor.' Like as not it's all true; but they'd ought to have settled that with the contractor before the fust shovelful of earth was dug. Still, they ain't no foolisher than the folks thet'll not take an education, nor keep out of bad company when they're young, 'nd yet expect to have their lives all satisfactory when they're older—no sir!

"Then, after the stairs is in, some folks make a fuss, 'nd say it ud hev been better to hev them in another place; 'nd they'd like to change the shape, 'nd size of some of the rooms, 'nd they're real mad when you tell 'em it can't be done. You wouldn't believe it, the things folks ask me to do—things you can't do short of tearin' down the hull buildin' 'nd startin' it over agin from the ground up. There's things you kin do, of course—closets, 'nd roofs, 'nd porches 'nd sich—but when a house has got beyond the beginnings you can't change the main lines, 'nd thet's all there is of it. 'Nd yet there's plenty of people thet expects to change their lives 'nd their naters when they get half-way through—kinder git converted some time or other, when they've had enough of the world 'nd its ways, 'nd make real fine first-rate Christians out of themselves. But thet ain't the way a good house nor a good Christian is built; it has to be from the ground up, stickin' to the plan all the while. Time to begin is in the beginnin' when you're young—yes, sir, every time!" And the foreman shut up his two-foot rule with a snap, and went off to oversee the laying of the hall floor.—Priscilla Leonard, in "The Classmate."

II CONFLICTING FEELINGS

White Funerals. Among the multitude the cry of joy could not be distinguished from the noise of weeping. Life brings many events where the cry of joy mingles with the noise of weeping.

In an ode to a royal bridal pair, Tennyson describes the event as "the white funeral of the single life." At the first glance the bridal ceremony appears the very antithesis of a funeral, and so critics objected to the laureate's image; yet there is a good deal of reason in the poetic conceit. The bridal pair with mingled feelings bid adieu to the single life; for whatever may be the joy of the hour, there is a real pathos in forsaking the home of one's youth, and practically sundering the most intimate and tender associations. When the guests, for a moment, indulge in reflections, and think of all the chance and change the event implies, they too will be conscious of contradictory emotions, and hardly know whether to laugh or cry. The soul, alive to the crisis, discerns the undertones of a dirge in the wedding-bells, and the gayest and saddest sentiments mingle, mock, and mystify. Neither altogether bright nor altogether dark, but partaking of the quality of both, the marriage service is not inaptly designated a "white funeral."

The last interment in the cemetery is another scene where the noise of the shout of joy strangely mingles with the weeping of the people. The godly life which is a series of progressive enhancements ends with a triumph which explains all that has gone before. The Master had a white funeral. "And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe." And that robe "white as snow" was a figure of the mighty, radiant elements which lighted the tragedy of Calvary. The blessed dead who die in the Lord share with him in the glory and hope of the resurrection unto life eternal.

Travelers tell us of fruits of the wilderness "which taste bitter and sweet, a strange, concentrated essence of the tropics": and so after years of acquaintance with commingling sweets and bitters, we come to the graveyard, the borderland, where we taste the concentrated essence of the contrasted problems of sin and redemption, the anguish of death and the rapture of immortality, the consciousness that all is won in the very event and moment in which all is lost.—Condensed from "Life's Unexpected Issues," by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

III PRAISING GOD

They Sang One to Another in Praising and Giving Thanks unto Jehovah.

There is a rapture that is unique and infectious in the solemnities of God's house, in its triumphal music and song. It affords an evidence of the divinity of religion that is most affecting, most convincing. The Japanese "Letters of Lafcadio Hearn" give a striking illustration of this. Hearn was a sensualist of the most pronounced type, a bitter scoffer at religion, one who wished that the missionaries might be shipped off to sea and the vessel scuttled; and yet in a frank moment he confesses to a friend that it is impossible to listen to a congregation singing, "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee," without deep emotion. His heart was wiser than his brains, and bore its witness to the eternal truth.—Dr. J. Stuart Holden.

Prayer and Praise. "Those who seek the Lord out of a pure heart will have abundant cause to offer praise. Who is the man that delights himself in the Lord, but the one whose life is an act of worship attuned to a spirit of thanksgiving and praise? Then how rich and comprehensive is the exercise wherein prayer and praise are blended in the proportion demanded by trust and gratitude! Recall some of the words by which praise is designated—give thanks, bless the Lord; sing unto the Lord, make known his deeds, extol his name, and show forth his salvation. These and such like terms show how we may 'give glory to God;' they are expressions of praise, and as our pious fathers taught us—

"Prayers and praises go in pairs,
He hath praises who hath prayers."

In a Methodist class-meeting the leader once announced as his first hymn,

"Ah, whither should I go,
Burdened and sick and faint?"

But no one started the tune. "Come, Brother Martin," said the leader, "you begin the tune." But he replied: "I can't, for I am neither burdened, nor weary, nor sick." "Then give out a verse yourself," said the leader, and in a few moments the little room in which they were met was filled with the sound of heartfelt song, for he had started—

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise."

Entering into God's Courts with Praise. A beautiful custom formerly prevailed among the Welsh miners of the Calumet and Hecla copper mine in northern Michigan when their work for the day was done. To a visitor standing at the mouth of the mine came faint sounds from the earth below which grew stronger and more distinct, "seeming like the weird melodies played by the wind on telegraph wires. Nearer and nearer they came, mingling with the creaking of machinery, and resolving themselves at last into the familiar notes of 'Nearer, my God, to thee.' In a moment the cage reached the top of the shaft, and the men who had been singing their way up from the depth of hundreds of feet stepped out and, baring their heads, joined in 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,' and then quietly turned homeward."

"Hallelujah! Amen!" At the World's Sunday School Convention held in Zürich, Dr. John R. Sampey told an incident that occurred on the steamer on which he crossed the Atlantic. There were two passengers who arose very early every morning and read their Bibles on deck. Neither could speak the language of the other, but, after several mornings of this fellowship without speech, one said to the other, "Hallelujah!" And the other responded, "Amen!" And then, at Dr. Sampey's invitation, the great audience united three times in a concert of joyous praise, in the words, "Hallelujah! Amen!"

"Sing It on Any Page." A little girl, who loved to join with the family in singing Gospel songs, kept urging her father to sing her favorite, "The Lily of the Valley." Upon being told to wait till he could find the page, she exclaimed, "Don't trouble, papa, I can sing it on any page!" It made no difference to the child whether the page displayed a song of sorrow or of joy, she

was ready to sing of One who is "the fairest of ten thousand." What a blessing it would be if God's grown-up children could follow that example! When the pages of life's book are full of disappointment and perplexity, no less than when they are filled with music, they might sing their song of gladness "on any page":—

In sorrow, he's my comfort,
In trouble, he's my stay,
He tells me every care on him to roll;
He's the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star,
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.
—"The Christian."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 11. I've always thought if I had my choice, an' my life could express worship, I'd choose for it to be praise.—Ruth McEnery Stuart.

Verse 11. Praise and thanksgiving lift the soul upward.—David Swing.

Verse 11. Thanksgiving feeds and ever kindles prayers as with coals of fire.—Luther.

Verse 11. If any one would tell you the surest way to happiness he must tell you to make it a rule to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you.—William Law.

Verse 11. "Be full of prayer for everything, full of care for nothing, full of thanksgiving for anything."

Verse 12. The trustful heart finds occasion for unmingled praise in the most mingled cup of joy and sorrow.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 13. Let the optimism of our anticipation drown the pessimism of retrospection.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The old men could not enter into the hopefulness and joy of the young men, and the young men probably had scant sympathy for the longing and grief of the old men. The young and the old should make an effort to understand and sympathize with each other.

We need to cultivate the spirit of thankfulness for all God's loving kindness to us.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The viewpoints of the old men and of the young men: the good old days and the golden days to come: retrospection and anticipation. See Chapter II of Hugh Black's "According to my Gospel."
2. The church a permanent need of society. See "The Biblical World," Oct., 1912.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Why did Ezra want to go to Jerusalem? (Ezra 7.10.) 2. Who was the king of Persia at this time? (*Guide*, p. 387.) 3. Where was the river Ahava? (*Guide*, p. 388.) 4. What was the value in our money of a silver talent? Of a gold talent? (Bible Dictionary.) 5. How many times do the words of our Golden Text or similar expressions occur in chapters 7 and 8 of Ezra? 6. What had happened in Jerusalem between the dedication of the Temple and the coming of Ezra? (*Guide*, p. 387.)

Questions to Think About. 1. How did Ezra prove his great faith in God? 2. Was his failure to take a military escort an act of presumption or of faith? 3. Why was it right for Ezra to go on such a long journey without an escort, and right for Nehemiah (Neh. 2.9) to have one? 4. What would the heathen king think of Ezra's religion if he did not practise what he preached? 5. How do Christians today dishonor their religion before non-Christians? 6. What are some of the things that we claim our religion will do for us? 7. Do we live up to our assertions when a test comes in regard to our trust in God? 8. Why did Ezra hold the keepers of the treasure to a strict account? 9. Should one who administers funds for religious purposes be held to an account for them?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Learn the stanza on page 391. Write "XV: Rebuilding and Dedicating the Temple."

EZRA'S RETURN FROM BABYLON

GOLDEN TEXT

The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good. Ezra 8.22

LESSON Ezra 8.15-36: verse 21-32 printed MEMORIZE verses 21, 22

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of him a straight way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22 For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.

24 Then I set apart twelve of the chiefs of the priests, even Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, 25 and weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering for the house of our God, which the king, and his counselors, and his princes, and all Israel there present, had offered: 26 I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels a hundred talents; of gold a hundred talents; 27 and twenty bowls of gold, of a thousand darics; and two vessels of fine bright brass, precious as gold. 28 And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto Jehovah, and the vessels are holy; and the silver and the gold are a freewill-offering unto Jehovah, the God of your fathers. 29 Watch ye, and keep them until ye weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites, and the princes of the fathers' houses of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of Jehovah. 30 So the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

31 Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the lie-in-wait by the way. 32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Review at Ahava: Levites Sent for, 15-20.
- II. Fasting and Prayer, 21-23.
- III. Gifts for the Temple Put in the Charge of Priests and Levites, 24-30.
- IV. The Journey and Arrival at Jerusalem, 31-32.

21. *A fast.* "A spiritual exercise:" compare 1 S. 7.6; 2 Ch. 20.3. "Appointed as the symbol of submission before God's will and of repentance from sin; as the means of intensifying religious fervor in prayer through the restraint laid upon physical appetite; as the testimony that 'man lives not by bread alone'" (Ryle).—*That we might humble ourselves before our God.* "Happy are they who have the grace to walk in the valley of humiliation, for this leads to the armory of supernatural power" (Adeney).—*A straight way.* A directed, unimpeded way, a prosperous journey.

22. *For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us.* Nehemiah (Neh. 2.9) took with him a strong guard, but Ezra thought he could not do this without showing a lack of faith in God, of whose protecting care he had said much to the king. His religion must stand the test. See p. 389.—*The enemy in the way.* Robbers.—*The hand of our God.* See Ezra 7.6, 9, 28, and compare our expressions, "You are in good hands," "We are in God's hands."—*Forsake him.* Trusting in the king's escort of soldiers rather than in God seemed to Ezra a forsaking of God.

23. *For this.* That his hand might be upon them for good, that they might have a prosperous journey. *Entreated of us.* Looking backward after the journey was made, Ezra knew that God had been with them.

24. *Set apart twelve.* From the rest of the priests who were going to Jerusalem.—*Priests.* In Neh. 12.24, Levites, RVm.—*Even.* Or, *besides*, RVm. According to the marginal rendering there were twelve priests and twelve Levites.

25. *Weighed unto them.* Delivered unto them by weight.—*The silver and the gold.* See 7.15-18.—*The vessels.* See 7.19, 27.—*The house of our God.* The Temple at Jerusalem.

26. *Six hundred and fifty talents of silver.* Estimating a silver talent as worth \$1,875 (Hastings), this means nearly a million and a quarter in our money.—*Silver vessels a hundred talents.* Worth a hundred talents, or \$187,500.—*Of gold a hundred talents.* A gold talent was worth about \$33,750 (Hastings), the hundred talents therefore, \$3,375,000.

27. *Darics.* A gold coin of Persia, worth about \$5.

28. *Holy unto Jehovah.* Consecrated, set apart for his service; Lev. 21.6.

29. *Princes of the fathers' houses of Israel.* The leading men.—*The chambers of the house of Jehovah.* The store-rooms around the center walls of the outer court of the temple; 1 K. 6.5; 1 Ch. 28.12.

31. *First month.* Nisan, April.

32. *We came to Jerusalem.* On the first day of the fifth month, Ezra 7.8.—*Three days.* For rest.

33. *Into.* Or, *by*, RVm.—*Meremoth.* Neh. 3.4, 21.—*Eleazar.* Neh. 12.42.

34. *By number.* The vessels.—*By weight.* The gold and silver.

35. *The children . . . exile.* Ezra's company.—*Offered.* Compare the offering of Zerubbabel and his company, Ezra 6.17.

36. *The king's commissions.* Ezra 7.21, 22, 24.—*Satrap.* Rulers of provinces.—*Governors.* Rulers of part of a district, a part of a province.—*Beyond the river.* Beyond the Euphrates.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

22. *To help us against the enemy in the way.* Although Ezra's company was a large one, wandering Bedouins, wild men of the desert, might attack and plunder, if not kill, the rear column. No caravan today, however large, would think of carrying on that journey such an amount of gold and silver without an armed guard.

27. *Fine bright brass, precious as gold.* Whether brass, the alloy of copper and zinc, was known to the Persians is doubtful. Utensils of bronze, the alloy of copper and tin, and of copper, were in use.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the leader of the first expedition that left Babylon for Judea? In what year? What conditions did they find in Judea? What sort of life were the Jews leading who remained in Babylon?

Between the Dedication of the Temple and the Coming of Ezra from Babylon. The first company of Jews under Zerubbabel went from the Land of Exile to Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, 538 B.C. The curtain of history falls in Judea after the second Temple was dedicated in 516 B.C., in the sixth year of Darius king of Persia. It does not rise again until the arrival of Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, in 458 B.C. The fifty-eight years or more which are passed over in silence were years of struggle and disappointment for the colony. The burst of enthusiasm for the Temple and its worship which the prophets Haggai and Zechariah inspired died away, the Temple was poorly furnished and its services poorly kept up, the walls of Jerusalem were still unfinished, and the people were disillusioned and demoralized, even intermarried with the heathen nations around them. Zerubbabel, if Jewish tradition is correct, returned to Babylon to die, and no leader arose to take his place.

Meanwhile the Persians had invaded Greece and the famous battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Platæa had decided their fate in Europe. The revolt of Egypt in the reign of Darius (487 B.C.) and again in that of Artaxerxes (462-456 B.C.) brought the Persian army through Syria, and it is probable that the people of Judea were called upon for supplies and even for service.

Ezra and His Expedition. Ezra was a priest and a scribe, "the most conspicuous of that order of men which now first came into prominence and



Persian Soldiers

ments of the past, they took a conspicuous place by the side of the Prophets. Such a one in the earlier generation had been Baruch, the friend of Jeremiah. Such a one now was Ezra in the Jewish schools of Chaldean learning."

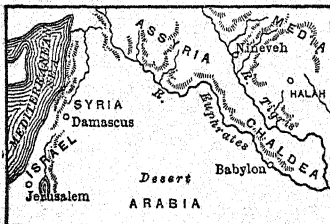
Ezra was a careful student of the law, and he was seized with a desire to enforce its provisions among his countrymen in Judea. King Artaxerxes gave him permission to organize an expedition for this purpose, entrusted to his charge large amounts of money and valuable vessels for the adornment of the Temple, and gave him a letter in which he directed his officers in Judea to do whatsoever Ezra might ask. "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of our fathers," exclaimed Ezra, "who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of Jehovah, and hath extended loving-kindness unto me."

Ezra and his company encamped for three days at the river Ahava. At this rendezvous he reviewed his followers and discovered that there were no Levites for the Temple services among them. He sent to Casiphia for them. Then he proclaimed a fast, and they all humbled themselves before God and besought his guidance and help on the journey.

For the time of Ezra's going to Jerusalem as regards Nehemiah's activities there, see the Historical Background of the next lesson.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The river Ahava, by which Ezra reviewed his company, must have been one of the tributaries or canals of the Euphrates, not very far from Babylon.



A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Although Ezra relied upon God for his safety on the way, he, nevertheless, prepared carefully for the journey, and exercised great precaution in regard to the valuable offerings for the Temple which he was carrying to Jerusalem. It has been said of Dr. Joseph Parker, of London, that he labored for the sermon he was to deliver as if he had no God to help him, and then preached in reliance upon God as if he had made no preparation. Could a teacher follow a better example than that of these two men?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Who was it that proclaimed a fast at the river Ahava? Who was Ezra? In what country was the river Ahava? Who were with him at the time? What else did they do there besides fasting? Why? Where were they going? Why?

For Older Pupils. Is it right for one who trusts God to insure his house against fire? Is it right for him to make provision for his family in his old age? What is our Golden Text? If God's hand is upon all his true followers for good, should they not leave all things to him and trust that he will take care of them? Let us see what our lesson teaches as to this.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE HAND OF OUR GOD IS UPON ALL THOSE THAT SEEK HIM, FOR GOOD

Prayer and Divine Help. Ezra had assured the king that upon all who seek God, his hand is upon them for good. But Ezra did not venture upon his long journey without asking God's blessing upon it and God's care on the way. He humbled himself before God, and sought of him a straight way. Prayer brings God's help. Stanley proved this in his perilous journeys in Africa. "On all my expeditions," he wrote, "prayer made me stronger, morally and mentally, than any of my non-praying companions. It did not blind my eyes, or dull my mind, or close my ears; but, on the contrary, it gave me confidence. It did more; it gave me joy, and pride, in my forest tracks, eager to face the day's perils and fatigues. Civilized society rejoices in the protection afforded to it by strong-armed law. Those in whom faith in God is strong feel the same sense of security in the deepest wilds."

Helping God's Hand. In a certain Eastern land two sheikhs were imprisoned. Sheikh Cassim was blind and Sheikh Ahmed was lame. They passed their time arguing about passages from the Koran. They came to this passage: "When God creates a human being, he creates also his inheritance, which must come into his possession." Sheikh Cassim said this must be taken literally, that God would send each man his portion, without any exertion on his part. Sheikh Ahmed, on the other hand, held that God intended each man to exert himself to obtain possession of his inheritance.

It chanced that a wealthy merchant bound himself by a vow to supply the prisoners with good food and extra dainties for a term of seven days. An officer proclaimed through the prison: "Ho! all ye poor, ye that hunger and thirst, come and partake of the inheritance and bounty of God!" Then the prisoners went to the prison yard where the food was given them.

Sheikh Cassim would not accept his friend's offer to lead him into the yard. "Nay," he said, "if I have any inheritance in this supply, God will send it to me here." He continued his prayer, while Sheikh Ahmed hobbled off to secure his portion.

On the seventh day the merchant himself visited the prison and heard what the blind sheikh had said. He was touched by his expression of faith and gave orders that a generous supply of food be brought to the blind man.

The next time that Ahmed saw his friend Cassim he told him of the merchant's kindness, and declared that it proved he was right, the inheritance came to him. "Very true," said Sheikh Ahmed, "God is indeed good to all who trust in him. But," he added, "remember that to you, as you waited, God sent a portion only once, whereas I, who took the trouble to go, received a portion seven times from his bountiful hand."

II TRUST AND ITS PRACTICE

In Times of Crisis. When Nehemiah went to Jerusalem he had an escort of captains of the army and horsemen of the king. When Ezra went, he trusted in the protection of God alone. Which one did right? It was only common prudence for Nehemiah to have a sufficient guard on a long journey where he was liable to attacks from robbers. Ezra, however, felt that his position was peculiar. He had told the king what great things God could do, and how he trusted God implicitly, and if now he asked the king for human protection on that perilous journey, he believed the king would think that he had only been talking—that he did not really trust God's power.

Whether or not we agree with Ezra's reasoning, we admire his loyalty to God and his wonderful trust. When no principle was at stake, he could be as prudent and business-like as anyone. Notice the great care he took with the large amount of money and treasure that went with them on the journey. He set apart men whose sole duty it was to guard this wealth, and on reaching Jerusalem he had the silver and gold and vessels weighed in the Temple, and the amounts written down, that they might be seen to equal the amounts received in Babylon.

It was the special occasion that freed Ezra. Recall the temptation scene in Jesus' life. "Then the devil taketh Jesus into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the Temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge concerning thee'; and, 'On their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.'" Did Jesus do as did Ezra, throw prudence to the wind, and thereby prove his trust in God? "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God," was his answer. Only the special occasion could free Ezra from the guilt of making trial of the Lord his God. As a rule, such imprudence would have been presumption. Occasions are rare in the life of a Christian when he is justified in trusting in God without making use of whatever means God has placed at his disposal to secure his own safety.

The Problem of the Missionary. Should missionaries refuse to carry firearms in traveling dangerous roads, and should they decline to call on their home governments for protection in times of war and rioting? Two principles have helped to guide many a Christian missionary. First, God does not ask us to follow the example of other men, but to trust and follow him. Carey went out under a society with guarantees; Hudson Taylor did not. Livingstone carried fire-arms for self-protection; Gilmour did not. God leads different men in different ways. Second, the one thing of importance is that we keep in such fellowship with God that we know his will for us, and so that our precautions testify to our faith and fidelity, and not to our lack of such faith. Ezra took certain precautions without endangering his testimony. If we would venture more upon our faith in God, our testimony to men would be more convincing; we would save in worry and in money, and we would be more sure of success and safety.—Delavan Leonard Pierson, in "The Sunday School Times."

Put Your Knowledge of God to the Test. There is a great difference between theorists and experimentalists. The world has always had its dreamers, men who had grand theories, but theories that could not be reduced to practice. The Duke of Wellington was tormented by men who were always inventing wonderful armor. One day a man came to the Duke with a very clever invention. He claimed that he had a bullet-proof jacket. The Duke told him to put it on, and to stand at a given distance from him. Then he called upon some of his officers to level their muskets at the man. Whether the man had taken out a patent for the jacket, I know not, but it looked as if he had taken out a patent for running! He was a speculator, a theorist, who did not want his venture to be put to the test.

What a difference when you come to another type of man—a man like Arkwright, the inventor of the spinning-jenny, or a man like Watt with his steam-engine, or like George Stephenson with his locomotive. Here you have men who capped knowledge by experiment and who came to real knowledge because they put it to the proof. If you want to know, you must do. If you want to know if the Bible is inspired, obey it and it will inspire you, and that is the best proof of its inspiration. If you want to know if the doctrine of the Atonement is true, rest in the love of God and practise the principle of living for others, and the philosophy of the Cross will be clearer to you every day you live.

As Carlyle says, "He who does nothing knows nothing." It is only in action that thought passes into knowledge. Obey the light you have, put it to the test of experience, and it passes out of theory, out of dreams, out of speculation into that other wonderful thing—conviction, knowledge, passion, principle. It is only by obeying the truth that we can know the truth.

Then again, it is only as we are obedient to the truth that we retain it. Do you think you can go on musing about the doctrines of the Bible, do you think you can go on discussing the philosophies of those doctrines, and that you can retain them? If you are to keep your faith in God, you must live in his fear. That is a protection from atheism. If you are to keep your faith in the Bible,

you must use it as the rule of your life. If you are to keep your faith in prayer you must pray. If you are going to keep your faith in immortality, you must live every day testing the powers of the world to come.—Condensed from "Knowledge through Conduct," by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Can You Do It? "That is beautiful!" exclaimed a heathen after the missionary had finished telling what the Christian life means; and then he added a searching question—"Can you do it?" Religion must stand the test of life. It must be "done." Edwin Markham describes the coming of a day when

"He shall say—the King,
Come, let us *live* the poetry we sing."

Our King says to us now, "Live the religion you profess, put your trust in God to the test." What is one's trust in God worth if it cannot free one from anxiety? Thought for the morrow one must have, but not anxious thought. In the words of Frederick Lawrence Knowles,

"Each fretful line upon your brow,
Dug by the plow of care,
Is treason to your pledge of faith
And satire on your prayer."

When Trust without Precaution Becomes Presumption. According to the view of the Christian Scientist, the presence of the physician in the sick-room is equivalent to a disavowal of the faith, a bit of tangible atheism, a thing as heathenish as the calling in the medicine-men of a savage tribe. We ought to be ashamed to summon medical aid seeing that we have boasted of the hand of our God being upon us for good. But this view throughout is miserably mistaken. The whole conception springs out of a lack of appreciation of the divinity that pervades all things, and betrays blindness to the glorious fact that natural laws and processes are the appointments of God and the channels of his grace, which, indeed, they are. There is no Christian Science except as all true science is Christian, and the cultured physician, working closely on the lines which condition health, is a loyal servant of God and humanity, in whom the pious sufferer has special grounds for trust. John Wesley tells that on a certain occasion he was "cured by sulphur and supplication," and all men who are wise as they are good will practise the dual treatment. To refuse medical aid and its prescriptions, trusting wholly in God, may by some be mistaken for a sublime faith, but it is really practical atheism, ignoring as it does the established order of God. Religious men must not presume on a guardianship unknown to other men, and in consequence neglect worldly caution. A marine-insurance company at Cadiz once took the Virgin Mary into partnership, covenanting to set aside her portion of the profits for the enrichment of her shrine in that city, not doubting that she would protect every vessel in which she had such a manifest interest. The infatuated company underwrote ships of all sorts at reduced rates, and forthwith came to grief. The same snare entices spiritually-minded men today; dispensing with ordinary circumspection, they attempt to conduct their business on what they consider a religious basis, when they ought to know that the most religious basis is the sound commercial basis.—W. L. Watkinson, in "Inspiration for Common Life."

III FREE-WILL OFFERINGS

Shaming One's Self. The silver and the gold which had been given for God's house by the king and his counselors and his princes and all Israel were "a free-will offering," Ezra said. It had been freely given, and must have been at the cost of much sacrifice on the part of some of the Israelites. Perhaps the spirit of sacrifice shown by the volunteers "shamed" those who remained into giving more freely than they otherwise would have done, just as it did in the case of the workers of the House of the Good Samaritan. "The Youth's Companion" gives a long account of how their free-will offerings were raised. The reports at a recent annual meeting were all discouraging, there was a deficit of six hundred dollars, the sum that had to be raised each year to pay the interest on the ten thousand dollar mortgage on the building. The work must be retrenched, said the directors.

Then one of the neighborhood women sprang to her feet and exclaimed in a shrill voice: "You ought to shame yourselves! You got no pizness to cut down de work! De Lord, he got plenty money! You got no faith! You got no pizness mit a debt. Pay if off! We women will pay one t'ousand tollar in one year; de directors pay nine t'ousand. I got one tollar here for working in de kitchen tonight. I gif dat now, and we get de rest of our t'ousand; and if you don't get yours, you ought to shame yourselves. You and we will all put our wheels to the shoulder and pay off de debt."

The last sentence saved the day; except for that, some one might have answered her with cold and dignified superiority. But the proposal that they all put their wheels to the shoulder relieved the tension by raising a laugh. One of the members of the board rose.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "the very least we can do is to accept this challenge. I do not see how it is possible for these women to raise one thousand dollars within a year, but if they do, surely we can manage to raise the other nine thousand." And so the directors voted.

Each of the women who attended the classes pledged twenty-five cents a week, and most of them paid it, although at the cost of great self-denial. They held a little fair and sold things of their own making, but the articles were crude and the returns small. In spite of hard work and great self-sacrifice, the fund grew slowly.

Just before Thanksgiving the women asked whether those accustomed to receive gifts of Thanksgiving dinners from the settlement might not give them up and let the money go toward the debt. The news of this last sacrifice led a famous singer to give her services at a concert in one of the churches. That brought the last of the thousand dollars, and something over, too.

At the next annual meeting the chairman of the board said: "I have great pleasure in reporting that we have closed the year with all our bills paid, and with the mortgage of ten thousand dollars discharged. We shamed ourselves and did it; and having done it, we are a little proud, and very grateful to the good woman whose timely challenge forced us to make the effort."

Free-Will Offerings for a Church in China. The floor of the meeting place where the church worshiped was of earth and got very damp and sodden in winter, so that the members were unable to kneel in prayer. One Sunday Mr. Wang and his wife appeared after the service had begun—a most unusual thing. They looked very hot and tired, and we wondered for a moment what were the bulky burdens which they carried on their backs. They came forward to the center of the little group of ten or twelve worshippers, and then each of them laid at my feet five nicely plaited straw hassocks, saying, "This is my present to the church."

Knowing their deep poverty I thanked them warmly, and added, "You shall be paid for these."

"Oh, no! Oh, don't," they replied; "we can do so little for the Lord's work, do let us do the little that we can."

"Where did you get them?" was the question upon everybody's lips, for straw was very scarce at that time, and I had failed to get anyone to make them for me. The reply gave further proof of their loving zeal. Mr. Wang said, "Well, in the daytime, when we were at work in the fields, we looked for a little scattered straw, and then, after our day's work was done, we went and gathered it up."

"But," said I, "working so hard as you do, how could you possibly find time to do this extra work?"

"Oh," he answered, "we just stayed up a few nights and plaited them."

My heart was very full that day as I saw these evidences of real devotion to God on the part of these poor peasants, who but a little while before had been in the darkest of heathenism. I could only think of them in their poverty as being "rich toward God," and rich indeed they are in another way also—they are being used in bringing the gospel to their neighbors and friends.—From a Letter of a Missionary.

An Analysis of Offerings. Four people are sitting near one another in church, listening to a missionary sermon. The first is a miser; he is really moved by the appeal, but to give up his money is like pulling teeth. He wonders how much he ought to give and whether he could keep part of what is in his purse; then with a resolute effort he puts purse and all into the plate. It

is an unselfish act; for it is one he thought right, and it is a hard one. Next to him sits a millionaire, who, as the plate passes, conspicuously flourishes a fifty dollar bill so that it is visible to his neighbors as he drops it in. At a little distance sit two women, one of whom without a moment's thought drops in all the money she has, and the other with great self-restraint refuses to give anything, because she knows her first duty is to her little ones.

Here we recognize that the miser and the woman who gave nothing are those who deserve our praise, for each is doing a hard act which takes courage and breadth of view. To the millionaire the gift means only a chance to air his liberality. To the first woman the gift is so instinctive that it is almost automatic or non-moral, because her nature is already an unselfish one.—Ella Lyman Cabot, in "Everyday Ethics."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 21. Pray to God at the beginning of thy works, that thou mayest bring them to a good conclusion.—Xenophon.

Verse 22. Happy and strong and brave must we be,—able to endure all things, and to do all things—if we believe that every day, every hour, every moment of our life is in his hands.—Dr. Henry Van Dyke.

Verse 22. There is a rational faith in God which is prepared to leap into the darkest gulf upon a clear indication of the Divine will, but which until that indication is given plants its feet on solid ground and takes no liberties.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The facts of life compel impartial minds to faith in the Divine hand. The government of God is a fact not to be denied. Let me continually realize it in my personal life. Let me discern thankfully and trustfully the guiding hand of God. Let me rejoicingly hide myself in the day of trouble and peril in the shadow of God's hand. Yea, let me also stand in awe and lay seriously to heart the teaching of the dark hours when God's hand is heavy upon me.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Ezra was careful not to do anything which might lead the king to say that he, Ezra, did not fully believe all he had said about God's power and his own trust in God. Do your lives show that you believe what you profess?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Business methods in religious affairs.
2. Ezra and the Book of Ezra. See the Historical Background and pages 33, 34 of our Introduction.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who were Benhadad and Ahab? (*Guide*, p. 396.) 2. When did this event take place? (*Guide*, p. 396.) 3. What is the meaning of the expression "the gods do so unto me and more also"? (*Guide*, p. 395.) 4. What is said about boasting in Proverbs? (Prov. 27.1.) 5. In James? (Jas. 3.5.) 6. In Second Corinthians? (2 Cor. 10.13, 16.) 7. How large was "this great multitude," verse 13? (Verses 25-30.) 8. What does Hos. 4.11 say about the effect of drinking? 9. What caused Hefferon's defeat at a Marathon race? (*Guide*, p. 396.) 10. Which states prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors?

Questions to Think About. 1. How does Benhadad's second demand differ from his first? 2. What did Benhadad mean by his boast? (*Guide*, p. 395.) 3. What did Ahab mean by his retort? 4. What proverbs state the same thing? 5. Do you like to hear others boast? 6. Do you ever boast? 7. What was the cause of Benhadad's defeat? 8. Find in the Bible four warnings against intemperance. 9. What effect has intoxicating liquor upon a man's efficiency? 10. What wonderful temperance measures did Russia take at the beginning of the war? 11. What have been the effects? 12. What temperance measures were enacted in France? 13. What harm may come from the use of alcoholic liquor taken in moderation? 14. What can the young men in our Sunday-school do for the school and the church?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Learn the stanza on page 399. Write "XVI: Ezra's Return from Babylon."

DEFEAT THROUGH DRUNKENNESS (WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY)

Golden Text

Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself
as he that putteth it off. I Kings 20.11

LESSON I Kings 20, 1-21 MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

1 And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together; and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and fought against it. 2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel, into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, 3 Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. 4 And the king of Israel answered and said, It is according to thy saying, my lord, O king; I am thine, and all that I have. 5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, I sent indeed unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; 6 but I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time, and they shall search thy house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. 8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken thou not, neither consent. 9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do; but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. 10 And Benhadad sent unto him and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. 11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on *his armor* boast himself as he that putteth it off. 12 And it came to pass, when *Benhadad* heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings, in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, *Set yourselves in array.* And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

* 13 And, behold, a prophet came near unto Ahab king of Israel, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thy hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah. 14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith Jehovah, By the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall begin the battle? And he answered, Thou. 15 Then he mustered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two: and after them he mustered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. 17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Benhadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out from Samaria. 18 And he said, Whether they are come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they are come out for war, take them alive. 19 So these went out of the city, the young men of the princes of the provinces, and the army which followed them. 20 And they slew every one his man; and the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them: and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with horsemen. 21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED
THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Benhadad's Daring Demands, 1-9.
- II. Benhadad's Blustering Boast, 10-12.
- III. Young Men's Mission, 13-15.
- IV. Defeat Through Drink, 16-21.

1. *Benhadad.* See 1 K. 15.18.—*Thirty and two kings with him.* Lords of small districts or of cities, and vassals of Benhadad.

3. *Thy silver and thy gold is mine.* To secure plunder and make Ahab his vassal was the object of Benhadad's expedition.—*Thy wives also and thy children are mine.* He demands the wives and children of leading citizens as hostages. This verse states the condition on which Benhadad offers to raise the siege of Samaria.

4. *I am thine and all that I have.* Ahab abjectly consents to Benhadad's humiliating terms.

6. *But.* Evidently Benhadad thought he had not demanded enough from so compliant a king, and he next sent word that the city must be at the mercy of his men for plunder. The demand here made differs from the first demand, which Ahab readily granted, in that "whatsoever is pleasant" included greater treasures than gold and silver only. "The houses of thy servants" may indicate a more extensive plundering than did his first demand, and the way in which Benhadad now declares he will secure the plunder may differ from Ahab's first expectation—instead of voluntarily surrendering his gold his palace is to be looted by the enemy.

7. *All the elders of the land.* All the high officials.

10. *The gods do so unto me and more also.* It was sometimes customary to slay an animal when a formal oath was taken, and these words, as then repeated, meant that the one uttering them asked to have the same fate as the victim if he failed to keep his oath. The words are used in this sense here.—*If the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.* Benhadad boasted in true oriental fashion—so great was his army that the dust of Samaria after the city had fallen before him would not suffice to give each of his followers a handful. Recall Prov. 27.1.

11. Samaria was not yet a heap of rubbish!

12. *As he was drinking, he and his kings.* Confident of victory, Benhadad was giving a banquet to the princes in his retinue.—*Pavilions.* Or, *huts*, RVm. Their temporary military booths. Our word *pavilion* is derived from the Latin *papilio*, butterfly, because of the fancied resemblance between a pitched tent and a butterfly with outstretched wings.—*Set themselves in array.* Or, *place the engines*, RVm. In order to make ready for the attack.

13. *A prophet.* We have no further knowledge about him.—*All this great multitude.* No fewer than one hundred and twenty-seven thousand, verses 25-30.—*Thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.* In this declaration we have specified the purpose of the entire narrative, and at the same time the standpoint from which it is to be comprehended. The attack of the Syrian king, who had grown so mighty, threatened Ahab and his kingdom with destruction; at this crisis God, who never forsakes his people, repeatedly granted them the victory, which was so extraordinary and wonderful that it could not possibly be ascribed to human power and strength, but only to God. It was designed to make king and people unmistakably certain that it was not Baal nor any other god, but the God Jehovah who "doeth wonders, and declareth his strength among his people, and redeemeth his people with a strong arm" (Karl Bahr).

14. *By the young men of the princes of the provinces.* "These two hundred and fifty-two governors' armor-bearers were comparatively a far more feeble force than Gideon's three hundred. The answer is practically a bidding to trust wholly in God, whose gift of success should be conditional on an act of faith" (Wood).

15. *Seven thousand.* This number probably included only the garrison at Samaria.

16. *At noon.* The besiegers would be resting in the heat of the day.—*Was drinking himself drunk.* Compare Belshazzar's use of a similar time, Dan. 5.1. "Drinking makes thinking impossible: some day thinking will make drinking impossible" (Scottish Reformer).

18. *Take them alive.* Benhadad doubted not that they could be taken without fighting.

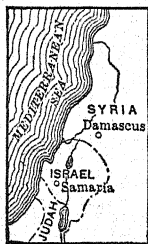
20. *The Syrians fled.* At the first attack.—*On a horse with horsemen.* Or, *with horse and horsemen*, RVm.

21. *The king of Israel went out and smote the horses and chariots.* He and those with him must have pursued upon the horses which their enemy had abandoned in their flight.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Which kingdom has been the subject of our study this year? With what kingdom did our study begin? In what years did Ahaz reign? Who was king of Israel in the time of the prophet Elijah?

The Time of Our Lesson. From a chronological point of view, it is somewhat disconcerting to stop in the midst of our study of conditions in Judea after the return of colonists from the land of the exile, in order to take up an event that happened in Samaria in the time of Ahab, one hundred and forty years before the time of Ahaz, with whose history our Old Testament study began in the Third Quarter. In all classes it will be wise to treat this lesson topically as a temperance lesson, paying little heed to its historical connection. The only facts necessary to know are that Benhadad was king of Syria and the most powerful ruler between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, that his capital was Damascus, and that in the reign of Ahab (856 B. C.) he entered the Kingdom of Israel with a large army and laid siege to Samaria, its capital, where he suffered defeat as our lesson tells.



A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A young man once said to me that if anything would drive him to drink it would be hearing his teacher talk against it. Our lesson affords teachers of young men who are weary of

The Kingdom of
Israel in the
Time of Ahab

"temperance talks" a fine opportunity to work for temperance by arousing in the young men a desire to make themselves count in the world's work. Here we have in the thirty and two kings men who in their idleness had nothing better to do than to drink themselves drunk in the pavilions, and we have in the young men of the princes of the provinces of Israel men who had so great a task to accomplish that they had neither time nor desire to drink themselves drunk.

By the young men—what a clarion call! There is abundant work for young men in helping to transform conditions in this nation. A young man who had been calling on Wendell Phillips and had been greatly interested in his account of abolitionist days, said to him on leaving, "Mr. Phillips, I think if I had lived in your time I would have been heroic, too." "Young man," returned Mr. Phillips with great indignation as he pointed down the street to several saloons, "You are living in my time and in God's time. Be assured that no man could have been heroic then who is not heroic now!" A young man imbued with fixed resolve to achieve high ideals, to work for his fellow men, will need no lectures about debasing himself and his powers with strong drink. He knows that their use defeats all high aims in life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Through the streets of Bourges during the French Revolution marched a regiment of school boys, uniformed and drilled, bearing a banner on which were inscribed the words, "Tremble, tyrants, for we shall grow up." Our lesson today takes us back to the time of Ahab, King of Israel, when a regiment of school boys, grown to young manhood, saved him and his kingdom from a tyrant. Who was the tyrant?

For Older Pupils. In one of the great Marathon races a South African runner, Hefferon, came out second. He explained afterwards why he lost the race: "My misfortunes happened near home, two miles from which, to my great regret, I accepted a draught of champagne. It was a great mistake. I got a cramp a mile from the finish, and then lost my head."

"Two miles—and then the goal is won! Oh, surely there can rise
No evil chance in two short miles to snatch away the prize!
Will strength give way that holds thus far? Will such strong courage fall?
Ah, no. But in a race like this, are strength and courage all?
There is temptation still to face—of all our foes the worst—
And see, the leader turns aside to slake his burning thirst.
He checks his pace thus near the goal; he takes the proffered wine:
Ah, those who drink a draught like that, the laureled prize resign.
His limbs grow stiff. Yet on he toils, to hear with glance of dread
A rival's footsteps close behind: they reach him—pass ahead.
In sight of home! But all in vain! The cheers of welcome rise
When feet unchecked as his are checked, speed on to win the prize."

Three thousand years earlier, in round numbers, a Syrian king was "on the home stretch." He had nearly won a great victory when he turned aside from the goal in view to slake his thirst in the noonday heat. He, too, lost his head completely. It was a great mistake.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I LET NOT HIM THAT GIRDETH ON HIS ARMOR BOAST HIMSELF AS HE THAT PUTTETH IT OFF

"Heap Big Wind, Much Dust, No Rain." Red Cloud was an able Indian chief. On one occasion a number of men came from Washington to make a treaty with him. One of them was a great braggart, and he made a long speech in which he used big words, and promised great things that he and the government would do for the Indians if they agreed to the terms of the treaty. Red Cloud listened in silence, and when the speech was over he arose and uttered his sentiments in one contemptuous sentence: "Heap big wind, much dust, no rain." His words might be applied to Benhadad's blustering threat.

Our words *boast* and *brag* both come from Old English words that mean *to make a noise*, and Webster says that *to bluster*, *to crow*, *to talk big*, mean the same thing as to brag or to boast. Benhadad blustered. He "crowed too soon." He ventured to "sing of the triumph before the victory," and the victory never came. He that has won a victory and is putting off his armor may tell what he has done, but he that is just putting his armor on and has the victory yet to win, should not boast of what he will do. "Do not sell the bear's skin before you have the bear," say the Germans. "Praise a fair day at night," say the English.

Assurance that is not Boastful. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." That is not the boast of a man putting on the harness, but the calm utterance of the conquering Christ when he was putting it off. He has conquered that you may conquer. Distrust yourselves utterly, and trust Jesus Christ absolutely, and give yourselves to him, to be his servants and soldiers till your lives' end. He was no self-righteous braggart, but a very rigid judge of himself, who, close by the headsman's block that ended his life, said: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." "Put on the whole armor of God" and when the time comes to put it off, you will have a peaceful assurance as far removed from despair as it is from boasting.—Dr. Alexander MacLaren, in "The Secret Power."

Mistaking Ideals for Realities. "I just love to go to school, and I'm never late," said the newly enrolled member of the primary class. "How many times have you been?" asked a bystander. "Once," was the reply. Doubtless she never meant to be late at school, but, like some other idealists, she had mistaken her dreams for realities. When she had passed through the term it would be time enough to boast that she was never late. Too many of us are satisfied to have high ideals and plume ourselves on them when they have never been put to the test. An ideal is a good thing, but "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off."—"Forward."

The Truly Great are Truly Humble. The greater progress a Christian makes spiritually, the less he is inclined to boast, because the more clearly he sees that not he, but God, is the source of whatever natural gifts or successes are his. As Cotton Mather was wont to say, when God renews his image in us he pulls down our proud thoughts.

Bishop Phillips Brooks, who was himself one of the humblest as well as the

greatest of God's workers, explains how this is brought about. "Christianity," he says, "does not set men at any work of mere resolution, saying, 'Come now, let us be humble;' but true Christianity puts men face to face with the humbling facts, the great realities, and then humility comes upon the soul as darkness comes upon the face of the earth, not because the earth has made up its mind to be dark, but because it has rolled into the great shadow."

Listen to what Ruskin in "Modern Painters" says on this subject. "The first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, or hesitation in speaking his opinions, but a right understanding of the world's doings and sayings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions, but usually know that they are right in them, only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows that he can build a good dome at Florence; Albrecht Dürer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work, "It cannot be done better"; Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anyone else: only they do not expect their fellow men to fall down and worship them. They have a curious undersense of powerlessness, feeling that the power is not in them, but through them, that they could not do or be anything else than God made them, and they see something Divine and God-made in every man they meet."

II BY THE YOUNG MEN

Young Men's Power. It was Disraeli who said, "It is a glorious thing to see a state saved by its youth." It was glorious in the days of Ahab, it is glorious in our own day. In the United States there are more than twelve million young men between fourteen and twenty-eight years of age. What a vast army! By the young men: what may they not accomplish! Some one has estimated their physical power by saying that in one day they could go into the forests and hew the timbers, go into the mines and dig the iron, go into the factories and manufacture the iron into steel rails and spikes, and then construct a railroad reaching from New York to San Francisco—all this between the rising and the setting of the sun. Who can estimate their moral and spiritual power in the same brief period of twelve hours, if they should use all their strength of mind and heart and soul in the doing of God's will and the realizing of God's purposes!

What a Few Young Men Have Done. Alexander at twenty-four had taken Thebes and crossed the Hellespont, Mark Antony at twenty-five was the hero of Rome, Napoleon at twenty-eight had revolutionized Europe and at thirty-five had made himself Emperor of France, Washington at twenty-three had saved Braddock's army from annihilation, led its retreat, and reinvigorated it with courage. Fox at twenty was a power in the English parliament, Pitt at thirty-four was Prime Minister, Hamilton at twenty-five was a member of our National Congress, Clay at twenty-one was a United States Senator, John Quincy Adams at fourteen was private secretary to a member of the Russian Embassy and at twenty-seven was minister to the Hague.

Bryant at nineteen had written "Thanatopsis," Beethoven at twenty-one was a great composer, Browning at twenty-three had written "Paracelsus," Wagner at twenty-three had composed "Lohengrin," Hume at twenty-three had written his treatise on "Human Nature," Ruskin at twenty-four had written "Modern Painters."

Wilberforce at thirty-two had compelled England to free the slaves, Luther at thirty-three had nailed his ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg, Adoniram Judson at twenty-two was preaching in India, Robert Morrison at twenty-two was doing heroic work in China, George Stevenson at nineteen had thought out an improved steam-engine, Jefferson at thirty-three had written the Declaration of Independence.

Young Men's Victory over Saloons. At the time when the United States set about its gigantic task of cutting the Panama Canal, it was felt by the Cabinet that some provision should be made for the social and moral welfare of the 25,000 white men employed in the operations. The climate of the Panama Zone, the activity of the saloon-keepers, and the energy displayed by the agents of iniquity made it necessary for the State to interfere on the side of righteousness. Accordingly, great club houses were erected at considerable cost, in which the white men were invited to take their ease and spend profitably the

hours of their leisure. But the saloons remained full, the clubs deserted. Then Mr. Roosevelt, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Association, suggested to his Cabinet that these houses, adequately financed by the State, should be handed over to the Young Men's Christian Association. Mr. Roosevelt carried the Cabinet with him. They all knew that the Association in America is "a real thing." And now these great buildings in the Panama Zone are crowded from base to roof with a strong and virile manhood, the saloons to all intents and purposes are deserted, the agents of iniquity have packed their bags and departed. Such is the force, the power, and the *irresistible efficiency* of the Association in America. And such also is its reputation with Government.—Condensed from "The Ordinary Man and The Extraordinary Thing," by Harold Begbie.

Effect of Responsibility upon Young Men. A load of trunks was stopped before a house one icy day in winter, and a very stout man went up the slippery walk to see what was the number of the house. Twice he fell down, and several more times he only just escaped falling. The number proved correct, and he returned to the sleigh to have the heaviest trunk of all put upon his back. The bystanders said he would surely fall with the trunk crushing down upon him, but no, this time he walked steadily up the sidewalk and never slipped once. What was the explanation? The second time he had a burden upon his back heavy enough to keep him steady upon his feet. So we have seen boys walking life's pathway with unsteady feet, seemingly having no stability whatever, and then some sudden turn of affairs, the death of a father or older brother, the loss of a fortune or some other disaster, has laid upon their shoulders a heavy responsibility, and they have steadied themselves to carry it. The burden has held them safe upon their feet.

"Be Strong!"

"Quit ye like men! Be strong!"

With steadfast hearts and true

We dare with an unshaken song

The work we have to do.

O Lord, be thou our strength!

Upon thy word we wait;

Thy squadrons white shall turn at length

The battle to the gate.

—Dr. M. W. Stryker.

III DEFEAT THROUGH DRUNKENNESS

An Arraignment of Drink. Benhadad and the thirty-two princes with him were drinking themselves drunk in their pavilions when the young men of the princes of Israel made their attack. Benhadad lost the battle through drink. Drunkenness always means defeat. Did you ever hear of a drunkard achieving anything? A drunkard has defeated himself, he has reduced himself below the level of the beast. Everyone will grant this. But not everyone is willing to grant the further truth that drinking which does not make a man drunk nevertheless defeats him, renders him incapable of achieving his best.

Perhaps you have heard "Billy" Sunday's famous sermon on "Booze," and know with what fierce intensity he shows up the defeat wrought through drinking intoxicating liquors. Here is Dr. J. H. Strang's account of the sermon and its effect as delivered in Baltimore:—

"It was like Kaulbach's great picture of the battling spirits in the air, realized. Demons from every firing-line of evil that could be spared were there to contest the truth, and to be swept before the power of it. With incredible rapidity of utterance for a full hour and a half the 'drive' against the saloon went on. The business lie was punctured, which pleads three hundred and fifty millions of dollars whiskey-revenue as over against twelve hundred millions of dollars spent for judicial machinery, and two billions of dollars spent directly for drink. The effects of alcohol upon blood and tissue, brain and nerve, heart, lungs, liver and kidneys were pictured with a vividness creditable to Aschaffenberg and Kraepelin. The plea of 'personal liberty' was exposed,—the 'liberty' which is arrogated by some men to destroy other men. The preacher championed manhood, childhood, the home, stretching out before our eyes a funeral three thousand miles long, the annual toll of the slain. We witnessed insults, saw weeping mothers and cowering children, heard pistol shots, saw friends fall by

the hand of friends, crazed by the same demon. But most moving of all was the spectacle of eleven bright boys waving Old Glory,—an exhibition of the kind of material which this mill of hell grinds up into thugs, cut-throats, thieves, reeling drunkards, and jabbering idiots. At the sight of them, the pride and hope of America's future, the manhood of the great audience could not be restrained. 'You men who, if you ever get a chance, will vote for prohibition, and put the saloon out of business, rise!' With cheers they broke loose. As far as one could see, the twenty thousand had risen to a man."

Drink Brings Defeat in Athletics. Every boy knows Connie Mack. Here is what he says about victory and the baseball player who drinks: "I have come to the conclusion that the success of the Athletics can be put down to clean living and quick thinking. Who puts the ball-player out of the game? You would naturally say 'the umpire,' wouldn't you? Well, all the umpires together haven't put as many ball-players out of the game as Old Man Booze. Keep in mind, though, that steady—'moderate'—drinking gets a ball-player in the end just as sure as boozing. Once I would take a man who drank, provided I thought I could handle him, and gradually break him of the habit. Now I wouldn't bother with a youngster who drinks: liquor slows a man up."

Drink Brings Defeat to Employees. The report of the investigation recently made among the large iron and steel manufacturing of our country concerning their attitude toward the employment of men who use alcoholic drinks is most interesting. The work was undertaken solely from an economic point of view, to determine what effect in these great industries drink has been found to have upon efficiency and reliability. Of the one hundred and twenty big corporations whose invested capital aggregates more than a billion dollars, only six permitted the use of alcoholic drinks in their plants. Without exception the testimony was that drinking decreases a man's efficiency and reliability and increases his liability to illness and accident, and that the moderate drinker is rated as an "undesirable employe," the last to be taken on and the first to be discharged, even though he may never get drunk. The president of one of the corporations said: "Any amount of liquor is injurious. The day will come when no drinker will even expect to get a job." "We know from general observation," wrote another, "that a man's efficiency is reduced from thirty to fifty per cent through the use of alcohol."

Drink Brings Defeat to Immigrants. The greatest enemy of the immigrant is the saloon; if he could not obtain liquor, it would prove one of the greatest blessings to him and to the community in which he lives. It is more necessary to prohibit the sale of liquor to certain groups of immigrants than to the Indians; for the most docile and law-abiding among them are turned into fiends by its use.—Edward A. Steiner.

Drink Brings Defeat to the Poor. It is very easy for us to condemn the extravagance and wastefulness and selfishness of the rich. But we have not sufficiently considered the unfaithfulness and wastefulness of the poor. Of the more than a billion dollars spent annually in this country for intoxicating drink, and the many millions for tobacco, it is safe to say that more than half of it is spent by people whose yearly income is less than six hundred dollars.—"Adult Bible Class Magazine."

Drink Brings Defeat in Spiritual Conflicts. We need to be at our best in dealing with the ordinary affairs of life. In commercial spheres business men know that if they are to make the best of things they must keep cool, and always hold themselves well in hand. In sports it is only through strict temperance that athletes expect victory. In all matters of craftsmanship demanding the fine thought, eye, or touch, absolute self-possession and mastery are imperative.

If in the battle of life, considered in its more material aspects, we must be always at our best, how much more is this true in regard to the moral and spiritual conflicts of life! Why should we by indulgence reinforce that animal part of us which is strong enough already? Why should we by indulgence obscure and enfeeble the spiritual element on the clearness and vigor of which the fate of the day depends?—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 10. Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.—Proverbs.

Verse 10. Sing not of triumph before victory.—Latin proverb.

Verse 10. Boast not thyself of tomorrow;
For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.—Proverbs.

Verse 12. The man who has at his command the best that is in him, at its best, I would, with all the emphasis I possess, advise and urge, leave drink alone—absolutely. He who drinks is deliberately disqualifying himself for advancement.—Ex-President Taft.

Verse 14. It does not take great men to do great things, it only takes consecrated men.—Phillips Brooks.

Verse 16. The whiskey business is like throwing sand in the bearings of a steam engine.—Thomas A. Edison.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The work outlined for young men's classes in one of our large churches is worthy of the best efforts of every class of young men. It is called "The Man for Man Movement," and includes: "Every man helping a man who is up against it. Every man praying for a man. Every man bringing a man to church each Sunday. Every man studying the teachings of the Son of Man. Every man lining up a man for Christ, Church and Kingdom."

William Jennings Bryan counsels every Sunday-school to have a book large enough to contain the pledges of the pupils, and to urge every boy and girl entering Sunday-school to sign this pledge—the sooner the better. Good habits formed in youth control the life, and total abstinence is one of the best of habits.

O Lord, we praise thy holy name, for thou hast made bare thine arm in the sight of all nations and done wonders. But still we cry to thee in the weary struggle of our people against the power of drink. O God, bring nigh the day when all our men shall face their daily task with minds undrugged and with tempered passions; and when all this black remnant of savagery shall haunt the memory of a new generation but as an evil dream of the night. For this accept our vows, and grant thine aid.—From a prayer by Walter Rauschenbusch.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Should the liquor traffic be abolished entirely, or should it be strictly regulated?
2. The changed attitude toward the use of intoxicants.
3. What the young men can do.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Where was Shushan? 2. What was the month Chisleu? (*Guide*, p. 402.) 3. To what does "the twentieth year" refer? (*Guide*, p. 402.) 4. Why is Judah called "the province," verse 3? (*Guide*, p. 403.) 5. Describe the office of cupbearer? (*Guide*, p. 403.) 6. Who was "this man," verse 11? (Neh. 2.1.) 7. How did patriotic Jews in the far East feel about their fatherland, as expressed in Ps. 137.5, 6? 8. When, according to Luke 18.1, should one pray? 9. Should requests be made in prayer? (Phil. 4.6.) 10. What does James 5.16 say about prayer that prevails? 11. Bring to class a short prayer written by someone which you think is good, and be ready to tell why it is a good prayer.

Questions to Think About. 1. What characteristics does Nehemiah's prayer show? 2. How does it show trust? Reverence? Unselfishness? Submission? Penitence? Gratitude? Definiteness? 3. Why does it confess sin? 4. How large a part in it has petition? 5. Have you ever felt unhappy over the troubles of your friends? 6. Have you been unhappy because of the troubles of the poor in your city, of the neglected anywhere, of the homeless Belgians, of the suffering Poles and Armenians? 7. Have you prayed for them? 8. Have you done anything else for them? 9. Do you pray for your country? 10. Did you ever say of anything, "It is very sad, but what can I do?" What could you have done? 11. Is your heart in your prayers? 12. Do you try to help answer your prayers? 13. For whom are you in the habit of praying?

Memory Work. Learn the stanza on page 409.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER

Golden Text

Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. I John 3.22

LESSON Nehemiah 1.1-11 MEMORIZE verse 11

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.

Now it came to pass in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, that were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days: and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, 5 and said, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments: 6 let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee at this time, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Yea, I and my father's house have sinned: 7 we have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples: 9 but if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heavens, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen, to cause my name to dwell there. 10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who delight to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. Sad Tidings from Jerusalem, 1-4.
- II. A Patriot's Prayer, 5-11.
 1. Invocation, 5.
 2. Confession, 6-7.
 3. Pleading God's Promises, 8-10.
 4. Petition, 11.

1. *The words.* Or, *history*, RVm.—*Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.* He is thus distinguished from the Nehemiah of Ezra 2.2 and Neh. 3.16. This first sentence is the heading of the Book of Nehemiah.—*The month Chislev.* The ninth month of the Jewish year, corresponding to the last part of November and the first of December.—*The twentieth year.* Of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 2.1.—*Shushan.* Susa.—*Palace.* Castle, RVm.

2. *One of my brethren.* His own brother, Neh. 7.2.—*The Jews that had escaped.* Though free for nearly a century to return to Jerusalem if they wished, the Jews were still in the habit of speaking of the return as an escape.—*The wall is broken down and the gates are burned with fire.* Evidently this refers, not to the condition after the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar a hundred and forty-

two years before this, but to the condition, after attacks of enemies, of walls restored, probably by Ezra. Ezra's action against the foreign wives (Ezra 10) would naturally result in hostilities.

3. *In the province.* Judah is now a district of the Persian province of Transpotamia—the district “beyond the River.”—*The wall of Jerusalem is broken down.* See the Historical Background.

4. *I sat down and wept.* Compare Ezra 9.3; 10.1. It is not a sign of weakness to be greatly moved in the face of a national calamity. “No man will do worthy work at rebuilding the walls who has not wept over the ruins” (Maclaren).—*Certain days.* Three months, according to 1.1 and 2.1.—*Fasted and prayed.* Compare Ezra 8.23.—*O Jehovah, the God of heaven.* “That commencement is no mere proper invocation, conventionally regarded as the right way of beginning, but it expresses the petitioner's effort to lay hold on God's character as the ground of his hope of answer. The terms employed remarkably blend what Nehemiah had learned from the Persian religion and what from a better source. He calls upon Jehovah, the great name which was the special possession of Israel. He also uses the characteristic Persian designation of ‘the God of heaven,’ and identifies the bearer of that name, not with the god to whom it was originally applied, but with Israel's Jehovah. He takes the crown from the head of the false deity, and lays it at the feet of the God of his fathers” (Maclaren).

5. *Great and terrible God.* See Dt. 7.21.—*Keepeth covenant.* Dt. 7.9; Ex. 20.5, 6.—*Them that love him and keep his commandments.* Ex. 20.6.

6. *Let thine ear be attentive.* Compare 2 Ch. 6.40; 7.15. Nehemiah uses a bold yet usual figure of speech, in which he ascribes to God the form of man.—*We.* Nehemiah counts himself a sharer in the guilt of the people.—*I and my father's house.* The individual and the family share in the sin of the nation. All reformation must begin with the reformer.

7. *Which thou commandedst.* Dt. 28.14.

8. *If ye trespass.* Lev. 26.33; Dt. 4.27; 28.64; 30.3.

9. *If ye return.* Dt. 30.1-5.—*Through your outcasts . . . heavens.* See Dt.

30.1-4.—*Unto the place that I have chosen.* Jerusalem. See Dt. 12.5.

10. *These are thy servants . . . hand.* Dt. 9.29.

11. *Delight to fear thy name.* “The union of fear and joy is the paradox of spiritual service” (Ryle).—*Thy name,* here, as often in the Old Testament, means *thy nature.*—*Grant him mercy in the sight of this man.* “This man” was Artaxerxes the king, and the “mercy” which Nehemiah sought from him was permission to give up his position of power at court and go to the help of his struggling people in Jerusalem. Artaxerxes: see the next chapter. “Artaxerxes was an absolute despot, surrounded with the semi-divine honors that orientals associate with the regal state, and yet in speaking of him before ‘the God of heaven,’ ‘the great and terrible God,’ Nehemiah loses all awe for his majestic pomp, and describes him boldly as ‘this man’” (Adeney).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *I sat down and wept.* In the East men as well as women express their sorrow by excessive weeping.

11. *I was cupbearer to the king.* This was an office of high honor in the Persian court, held only by statesmen and courtiers. Before serving the wine to the king it was the cupbearer's duty to pour it into the palm of his hand and drink, so that it was essential for his own sake as well as for the king to make sure the wine was not poisoned.

It is interesting in this connection to recall the great care taken in the preparation of medicine for England's royal household that it may not be tampered with. When a prescription is brought by a royal messenger to one of the royal dispensers—there are several—the dispenser takes the date and time of its receipt and then passes into a private room where all the glass cupboards that contain drugs are securely



Assyrian Cupbearer with
Pan

locked. A writer in "Tit-Bits" describes the precautions then observed. After the prescription has been entered in a book—each member of the royal family has his or her prescription book, which is provided with a lock and kept in a safe—the work of dispensing is done by the dispenser and his assistant. The cupboards are unlocked and the drugs wanted brought out and placed on a table. Each drug before being used is analyzed, and the necessary quantities weighed and measured on two or three different pairs of scales to ensure exactness. The water used is of the highest state of purity, and every possible care is taken to keep it in that state while the medicine is being made up. When the medicine is finally bottled the names and quantities of every ingredient are placed on the label, together with directions as to taking written in English and Latin. The bottle, after being corked and sealed, is placed in a strong case, which is locked. This case has two keys, one being retained by the dispenser and the other being in the possession of the royal personage for whom the medicine is intended. A trusted royal servant or a king's messenger conveys the case and its contents to the royal residence, where it is unlocked and the bottle of medicine examined and the particulars upon the label checked by the royal physician in attendance.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the leader of the first Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the Captivity? In what year did they return? What did they do? When and under whom did the second group of exiles return? What have you learned about Ezra and his work? What was the position of many Jews who had remained in Persia? What lesson about prayer have we had?

Ezra's Reform. Two weeks ago we heard about Ezra's journey from Babylon to Jerusalem with his company of colonists and his gifts of gold and silver and vessels for the Temple. He was made the chief judge of the whole Jewish community, and his first reform concerned the Jews' intermarriage with the heathen people. As Stanley remarks, Ezra was a Scribe first and a Priest afterwards, the Temple was an object of his veneration, but it was nothing compared to "The Law." And Dean Stanley calls our attention to the fact that even if the patriarchal alliance of Abraham with the Egyptian Hagar or the Arabian Keturah, or the marriage of Moses with the Midianite or the Ethiopian, provoked a passing censure, it was instantly and strongly repelled by the loftier tone of the sacred narrative, and there had not been the faintest murmur audible when the ancestors of David once and again married into a Moabite family, nor when David took amongst his wives a daughter of Geshur. But it was the peculiarity of the age through which the religion of Israel was now passing that to the more keenly strung susceptibilities of the nation every approach to the external world was felt as a shock and pollution. The men who had married heathen wives were compelled to part with them and even with their children.

Tidings of Deplorable Conditions in Jerusalem Brought to Nehemiah. Thirteen years intervene between Ezra's reform and the beginning of Nehemiah's memoirs in the Book of Nehemiah. The same king, Artaxerxes Longimanus, is on the Persian throne, and it is now the year 445 B.C. A rebellion of Egypt has been suppressed, but Megabyzos, the satrap of Syria, has been defiant and has succeeded in gaining a measure of independence. Grave disasters have meanwhile befallen the Jews at Jerusalem. The natural inference from the Book of Ezra, which would account for the sad plight of the city as reported to Nehemiah by his brother Hanani, is that Ezra's reforms aroused the hatred of the foreign nations whose daughters had been treated with scorn, and they had made breaches in the city's walls.

The Book of Nehemiah. See pages 33-35 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Shushan was Susa, the magnificent city in the province of Elam which was made by Cyrus one of the capitals of the Persian Empire and was the royal winter residence. It was three hundred miles east of Babylon.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Said a young man to a Christian worker: "What do you think about prayer? I don't know what I think, and most of us, even the best church fellows, don't

think it means much—not in real life, you know. I belong to a class and I wish we would have some study about prayer and such things. It seems as if everybody steered clear of it." You have a golden opportunity today to convince your class that all prayer means much in real life.

Recall the truths learned about prayer from Lesson VII of the First Quarter and Lesson XIII of the Third Quarter. Today's lesson teaches the use and the nature of prayer. Prayer may mean to your pupils petition merely, it may be to them but a synonym for making requests for one's self. That prayer comprises ever so much more, and that petition should be made for others as well as for self, is seen in Nehemiah's prayer. The true spirit of prayer can be acquired only by prayer, but a careful study of the great prayers of the Bible can start one aright.

Your pupils may pray, but their prayers may be wholly perfunctory. The dictionary says that "perfunctory" means "done merely for the sake of getting through." Help them to gain in their prayer life a very real sense of communion with God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. By questions recall the lesson about Daniel praying in his chamber with his face turned toward Jerusalem. Question your pupils about Daniel's official position, and about his love for Jerusalem. Today we study the prayer of another man who was enjoying a place of honor and influence in a foreign court far from Jerusalem, one who had never seen that city, nor had his father, nor his grandfather, and yet he loved it as did Daniel. Why?

For Older Pupils. Three young men were returning wearied from a long tramp, when they met two small boys who were having all they could do to drag along a well-filled cart. One of the men quietly took the handle of the cart out of their small hands, and went out of his way to pull the cart home for them, talking all the time gaily and giving the boys a merry time. As the other men went on their way, one said to the other: "Queer thing to bother himself about. Does he know all the youngsters in town?" "He probably didn't know them at all," replied the other. "But you don't know him yet, do you? He's like that about everything. He always takes the load."

We have come to the history of a man of affairs, of whom this same fine word of commendation could be said, that he always took the load. Who is he and what was the first load that he assumed for others?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I OTHERS' BURDENS

Whatever Concerns Our Fellow-men, Concerns Us. Moses in his high position at the court of Pharaoh might lightly have said that he could do nothing for his brethren toiling at their forced labors under the lash of the taskmaster. As an Egyptian he could do nothing to lighten their burdens, and he might have spoken a few words of sympathy to them, and then have gone his own way, congratulating himself that he had escaped their hard lot. The only way in which he could bear their burdens was to make himself one of them, to suffer with them, to use his higher wisdom for them as their leader.

The little Hebrew maid in the house of the great Syrian general might have said that in her lowly position as servant she could do nothing to help her master. Surely she had no call to bear his burdens! But she was the only one in all that realm that could send the great Syrian to the prophet in Israel to be cured of his leprosy.

Nehemiah at the Persian court might have felt no obligation resting upon him to go to the help of people he did not know in a far-distant land he had never seen. Yet he was the one whom God chose to bear the burdens of his weaker brethren.

Each one owes something to others. Each one has a duty of lightening the burden of some one else. We are our brother's keeper, and our brother is the one in need whom it is in our power to help. "Whatever concerns our fellow-men, in any quarter of the world, concerns us," Dr. Hillis emphasizes. "The sorrows of women and little children are become our sorrows. The moan of a child in the distant South Sea Islands is a sob in our ear that forbids rest and sleep. The strong nations are lifting their shields about the weak ones. They

are determined to end the slave driver in Central Africa, and the reign of the despot and fiend in whatsoever quarter of the earth. There are no foreign zones of influence any longer. The world has become one through its sympathy and the waxing sense of justice. And this new world consciousness of suffering prophesies the coming triumph of the teaching of Christ."

Where a Burden-Bearer Should Get His Strength. The conversation on board ship of two men, a convalescent and his friend a doctor, is reported in "The Youth's Companion." The convalescent began by talking freely about himself.

"They sent me away for my health," said he, "and I am returning better, but not yet well. The trouble is with my nerves, and I do not seem to get over it, and I am going right back into what occasioned my breakdown. I heard a sermon a while ago, which said that the human race may be divided into two classes, the lifters and the leaners. Now I have three or four brothers-in-law and two or three sons-in-law, and I have to do the thinking and the planning and the financial backing for the whole crowd. I don't mean that they will not work, or that they try to 'sponge' on me. It is merely that they don't know how to work without some one to push them on and show them, and hold them up. There isn't a lifter among them; they are leaners, every one of them. That's what broke me down, doctor, and that's what I am going back to; and I think over and over again that that preacher knew what he was talking about."

"I wonder if that was all the preacher said?" the doctor remarked.

"Oh, he told everybody to lift, and I am doing that."

"Yes," said the doctor, "but you seem to have got out of the sermon only the lesson that would have been good for other men. I wonder if he didn't also tell you to learn how to lean. A man must lean on something or he cannot lift. He must have faith and hope and something to stand on, or the ground gives way under him. I have a suspicion that the thing you did not get out of that sermon was the very thing you needed. My friend, I rather think the preacher told you to lean on the Lord and then lift. You have learned to do the lifting, and the best advice that I can give you is to learn where to lean."

"I shouldn't wonder if you are right, doctor," said the other, "and now that you speak of it, I rather think there was something of that sort in the sermon."

"There is nothing I could recommend that could possibly do you so much good as just that," said the doctor. "Faith and hope are curative agents of the first value. It is well that a man should lift, but important also that sometimes he should lay down his load in quiet trustfulness. If you can get that out of the preacher's sermon, or mine, it will do you more good than medicine, and you can lift with new courage."

II PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Nehemiah's Prayer. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." One condition of prayer that avails much is that it must be the earnest desire of the one who prays. Oft-times prayer is offered for what, if granted, would be most unwelcome. John Knox prayed, "O God, give me Scotland, or I die," and God gave him Scotland. Nehemiah prayed in effect, "O God, give me Jerusalem, or I die, and God gave him Jerusalem."

"Hearken unto the prayer of thy servant," said Nehemiah. We go to a friend intending to tell him something, but we find him in a mood wholly at variance with ours; we know that our communication will receive slight attention under the circumstances, and we decide to wait a more fitting season. How common an experience is this! Not so is it in our messages to God. All times and all seasons are alike with him, and his ear is ever attentive to our cry.

Nehemiah's appeal is to the God who keeps his promises and is abundant in mercies; it confesses the sins of the people and his own, and acknowledges their debt of gratitude to God, and it is a prayer for others whose burdens hang heavy on his heart, so heavy that he would sacrifice his position at court to go to their relief, and therefore he asks God to prosper him in his purpose.

His prayer was for others. In a recent address in this country, Dr. Jowett emphasized the thought that Christ said, When ye pray say, "*Our* Father," not "*My* Father." There are times when the personal cry of sorrow obtrudes the plural need, but there can be no real prayer when the singular is used rather

than the plural, he said. It had been his temptation to pray in a narrow circle, for the same things in that same circle with no thought of the vast need of humanity, but now he tries to think himself into the sorrows and burdens of others that he may help them. When he asked his little daughter to think of some one for whom she had never prayed, she answered, "The policeman." "I had been preaching twenty years, and had never thought to pray for the policeman," said Dr. Jowett, as he asked each one in his large audience not to go to sleep that night until he had given a plural prayer for some one for whom he had never before prayed.

Only a small part of Nehemiah's prayer is petition. Prayer is often to us an urgent expression of our wants. Read his beautiful prayer in the ninth chapter of Nehemiah, and notice that in all its thirty verses there is not one direct petition. Such a prayer of adoration, praise and confession deepens one's sense of God and enriches one's life.

The Most Christlike Prayer. The most Christlike prayer is prayer for others, that God's will may be done in them, that in the world they may be kept from the stain of the world, that they may be comforted in sorrow, upheld in toil, guided into the fullest fruition of their lives. Such prayer is not simply the normal utterance of Christian faith and love; it achieves wondrous results; in it space is annihilated, and soul touches soul. Devout men have always believed this. Many a man has felt around him all his life an impelling, restraining influence which he has ascribed to his mother's prayers; in moments of moral peril he has felt himself arrested as by an unseen hand. The great missionary movement has been built up largely upon the prayers of the faithful.

"Away in foreign fields they wondered how
Their simple word had power;
At home the Christians, two or three,
Had met to pray an hour."

Today modern conceptions alike of the universe and of the individual make easier the faith that such prayer is a positive force. True, we are just reaching the first outlook upon an unknown country; what wonders are beyond no man knows. But the glimpses already opening to the vision—the self beneath the sphere of consciousness where some tell us spirit has its meeting-place with spirit, and God with man; the new emphasis upon mental suggestion in healing diseases alike of the body and the mind; the reality of telepathic communication, which is probably the one thing thus far fully established by psychic research—all these aid the belief that when I pray for my friend I am touching him with spiritual energy. When I suggest to him, even if he be distant from me, that he can conquer his weakness, that he can rise above his sorrow, that all things are possible to him that believeth, I am helping to bring spiritual forces at least within his reach, I am pleading for that very faith which the Master always required ere his love wrought its wondrous work.—Alexander MacColl, in "A Working Theology."

Pray for Missions. The source of the spiritual vitality and power of any Christian movement is prayer. Our hope and confidence in this enterprise of world-wide missions are chiefly placed, not in the extent and strength of the missionary organization; not in the number and power of the missionary force; not in the fulness of the treasury and in well-appointed material equipment; not in the achievements of the past, even those of a spiritual character; not in the experience acquired by centuries of Christian missions; not in the methods and agencies which have been devised; not in the brilliancy and popularity of the leaders of the missionary movement at home and abroad; not in statesmanlike and far-sighted policies and plans; not in enthusiastic forward movements and inspiring watchwords—on none of these considerations do we rely principally, for it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The source of the power of any spiritual movement is God, and the energies of God are released in answer to prayer.—John R. Mott.

The Result of a Child's Prayer. In a sermon preached in England, Mr. A. L. Kemp related this effect of the prayer of a little child for a cab driver friend. One day the man crept quietly up the stairs to his little friend's room and heard these words as he neared the door: "Oh, Father, do not let him be drunken any more; he is so good and kind and I love him." The man knelt

at the bedside on his knees and said to the lad through his tears, "Were you praying for a waif like me?" "Yes," said the boy, "I always do that. You're no waif, you're a man." And the man never forgot that night and that prayer; in the crowded streets, piloting his cab through the city, the words winged with love, rang in his ears like joy bells, "You're no waif: you're a man," till the refrain made him stand true, borne into manhood through a child's simple prayer.

A Woman's Prayer. A minister was praying at the bedside of a dying woman. "Wait a moment," she said, as he started to rise from his knees. "I want to pray for you." And very tenderly she prayed, with her hand upon his head. "For ten years, ever since you became my pastor, I have offered that prayer for you every morning and every night," she told him.

The minister went away with tears in his eyes and a strange warmth in his heart. He had known that this woman was sweet-spirited and true, but he had never guessed that she had a place in her prayers. "I wonder how many of my six hundred church-members pray for me?" he asked himself. Not all of them, certainly; yet, doubtless, more of them prayed for him than he had dreamed. The thought was sweet and helpful to him.—"The Youth's Companion."

III SPECIFIC PRAYER

Nehemiah's Petition. "Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." From the record that follows, we know that this man was the king, that the mercy Nehemiah wished was the king's favor and permission to go to the aid of his fellow countrymen in Jerusalem, and the prosperity he besought for himself was success in the undertaking he had in mind. His prayer is most indefinite in words, yet most definite to himself and to God in meaning. Did not Christ tell us that our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him? How more real a thing, sometimes, is communion with God than communion with man! We talk to one another and the very words we use oft-times hide our actual meaning, but in our talks with God, thought need not be expressed in words, or may be very poorly expressed, yet our meaning is understood, for there spirit with Spirit meets.

A Parable of the Prayer-Meeting. In an account of "Johnnie's Request," Ada R. Habershon tells how Johnnie left his playmates in the yard while he ran into the house to ask his father for money with which to buy candy.

"Oh, father," said the boy on being asked what he wanted, "I am so glad that you are going to build a new house, and that the drawing-room will have such a beautiful view, and we're so glad that there will be such a splendid room for us children. We are delighted to think there will be a good garden, and that there will be lots of flowers—roses, and lilies and sweet peas, and a frame for violets. We're so looking forward to the fruit we shall be able to gather, the ripe strawberries and raspberries; and, father, we are ever so glad that you are going to have plenty of apple trees and pear trees; and it will be splendid to have a greenhouse with vines and peaches and beautiful flowers. And, father, we are so pleased to hear that you are going to do so much for the neighborhood. The new schools will be a great help to the village people, and we are thinking about the almshouses for the poor old people, and the new ward for the hospital."

"But what do you want, my boy? What did you come in from the garden to ask me for?"

"Please, father, old Peter has come around with his basket; so will you give us sixpence for sweets?"

"Why certainly, Johnnie, here it is."

"Oh, thank you, father," and off he ran to the other children, who were waiting impatiently.

"What a long time you have been, Johnnie," said Bob; "we thought you were never coming, and old Peter wants to go on to the village."

"What were you doing?" said Dick. "Didn't father want to give you the money?"

"Oh, yes," said Johnnie, "he gave it to me as soon as I asked him, but I didn't like to tell him what we wanted too quickly; I thought I'd better talk a little about the new house first."

Our Prayer.

Blessed Redeemer, how great is my need!
Hear me, I pray, as thy promise I plead;
Thou who hast led me thus far on my way,
"Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day."—D. W. Whittle.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 2. The first condition of sympathy is knowing, and the second is attending to what we do know.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 4. If you want to do people good you can, but you must pay the price for it.—Dr. Maclaren.

Verse 6. The true patriot is bound to find that his country needs, above all things, God.—Newton H. Marshall.

Verse 6. He that prayeth for another is heard for himself.—Jewish Saying.

Verse 6. Intercession is love at prayer.—Dr. J. E. McFadyen.

Verse 6. When you pray get beneath somebody's burden.—J. H. Jowett.

Verse 6. Make my prayer from beginning to end a duet. Let it ever have two voices—my brother's and mine.—George Matheson.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Nowhere does the Bible say, "Pray," or, "Thou shalt pray." "*When ye pray,*" are the words which preface Christ's "Model Prayer." The Old and New Testaments alike assume the need and the duty of prayer, and concern themselves with the form and content of the prayer which is pleasing to God. Prayer is the drawing of a soul toward God in recognition of its dependence on him—the recognition of this dependence impels to prayer. Nehemiah was humbly conscious of his dependence on God, and from his prayer we may gain lessons in regard to the content of prevailing prayer. How "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" we shall see next week. Today we see that such a prayer is earnest, not perfunctory, listless, or half-hearted; it confesses sin and is full of confidence in a God of lovingkindness and tender mercy; it is unselfish, a prayer for others, not a prayer filled with petitions seeking one's own gratification; it is specific and does not deal with "vague and glittering generalities"; and it is the prayer of a man who is going to do all he can to help answer his prayer.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The nature of prayer. See Second and Third Topics; "The Secret Prayer Life," by John R. Mott.
2. The things in our national life for which we should pray.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the oriental etiquette concerning the expression of one's countenance in the presence of royalty? (*Guide*, p. 411.) 2. How long a time did Nehemiah "set the king," verse 6? (*Guide*, p. 411.) 3. What is meant by "beyond the River," verse 7? (*Guide*, p. 411.) 4. What is meant by "Haronite"? (*Guide*, p. 411.) 5. To what do the "three days," verse 11, refer? (See the following verses.) 6. What midnight ride did Nehemiah take three days after reaching Jerusalem, and for what purpose? (Neh. 2:12-16.) 7. How did Nehemiah show generosity to his countrymen during the years that the walls were being built, as told in Neh. 5:14-18?

Questions to Think About. 1. Why was Nehemiah "sore afraid"? (*Guide*, p. 410.) 2. How long a time did Nehemiah have for his prayer, verse 4? 3. Why is the presence of the queen noted? (*Guide*, p. 411.) 4. Why were Sanballat and Tobiah "grieved," and what does that word here mean? (*Guide*, p. 411.) 5. Is our lesson title appropriate? 6. What made Nehemiah's prayer effectual? 7. If you pray for missions how can you help answer your prayer?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Learn the stanza on page 413. Write "XVII: Nehemiah's Prayer."

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER ANSWERED

Golden Text

Ask and it shall be given you. Matthew 7:7

LESSON Nehemiah 2:1-11 MEMORIZE verses 5, 6

1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, when wine was before him, that I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. 2 And the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid. 3 And I said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me. For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. 6 And the king said unto me (the queen also sitting by him), For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. 7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the River, that they may let me pass through till I come unto Judah; 8 and a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the castle which appertaineth to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

9 Then I came to the governors beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me captains of the army and horsemen. 10 And when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly, for that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. 11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Artaxerxes Grants Nehemiah's Prayer, 1-8.

II. Nehemiah's Journey to Jerusalem, 9-11.

1. *In the month Nisan.* The first month. This note of time has occasioned trouble, because in the first chapter we are told that Nehemiah did not receive the tidings about Jerusalem until the month of Chislew, the ninth month, of this same year. Some scholars think that the post-exilic calendar is the one Nehemiah here uses, in which Tisri (the seventh month) begins the Sacred Jewish year, Chislew being then the third and Nisan the seventh months. Others think we have here an error of a scribe.

2. *Then I was sore afraid.* The time had plainly come to make known his desire, and for its success he trembled. Oriental kings, moreover, have always been very arbitrary, and it was a daring thing to bring sorrow into the presence of royalty.

3. *And the gates thereof are consumed with fire.* As Dean Stanley says, in those days a city without locked gates and lofty walls was no city at all.

4. *So I prayed to the God of heaven.* "Nehemiah was shooting the rapids, and he felt that he himself was no pilot for the dangerous hour" (Watkinson). "How little the royal pair guessed what was transpiring between the king's question and the reply, which was given, apparently, without a moment's interval! But how inspiring is this example for ourselves! Between a question, which fills you with anxiety and alarm, and your reply, you can have an interview with the King of Kings, but you cannot gain this habit of ejaculatory prayer unless you spend prolonged periods in holy fellowship" (F. B. Meyer).

6. *The queen also sitting by him.* The impression which this note makes is that the queen was favorable to Nehemiah.—*I set him a time.* He was gone about twelve years, Neh. 5.14.

7. *Beyond the River.* Beyond the Euphrates.—*Let me pass through.* He received letters of safe conduct through the Persian provinces between Shushan and Judea.

8. *The king's forest.* Because the keeper's name, Asaph, is Jewish, it is thought that this forest formerly belonged to the royal house of Judah. In that case it was in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and was of oaks.—*The castle which appertaineth to the house.* The royal palace was on the north of the Temple-house, or Temple.—*According to the good hand of my God upon me.* This expression brings to mind Sargent's statue of Phillips Brooks, which has back of it the figure of our Lord with his right hand resting on the great man's shoulder, symbolizing the fact that Phillips Brooks' deeds were sanctioned by Christ and he was empowered by Christ.

9. *Captains of the army and horsemen.* A bodyguard attended him.

10. *The Horonite.* A native of Beth-horon or of Horonaim.—*And Tobiah.* Sanballat and Tobiah appear frequently in the book of Nehemiah as Nehemiah's bitter foes. "The race-hatred between the Jews and the Ammonites and Moabites may explain in some degree their hostility. But in all probability the Samaritans and the neighboring nations were combined in the desire to foil every effort made to reinstate Jerusalem in her old position of being the most powerful town in Palestine. The policy of Nehemiah would weaken the neighboring tribes in proportion as it would strengthen the Jews."—*Heard of it.* Of Nehemiah's coming to Jerusalem and of his purpose.

11. *Was there three days.* Three days before he took his midnight ride around the city to view its broken walls, verses 12-16. Nehemiah continued to live in Jerusalem, probably in the palace of the Governors that overlooked the Temple area. He refused to accept any official salary, and for twelve years maintained an open house for one hundred and fifty guests at his own expense, Neh. 5.14-18.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Why is thy countenance sad?* It was a rule of court etiquette, apparently, that nobody should be sad in the king's presence. A gloomy face would be unpleasant to the monarch. Shakespeare's Cæsar knew the security of cheerful associates when he said:

"Let me have men about me that are fat;
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights;
Yond' Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous."

Besides, was not the sunshine of the royal countenance enough to drive away all clouds of trouble from the minds of his attendants?—Walter F. Adeney.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When Ezra went to Jerusalem from Babylon, how did he go? Why did he not have a military escort? What news reached Nehemiah at Shushan concerning the condition of Jerusalem? Where was Shushan? What was Nehemiah's position there? What did he first do about the matter?

Nehemiah's Prayer Answered. Nehemiah's prayer (last week's lesson) was the prayer of a man who was going to do something to help answer it. He prayed for guidance and help in gaining the Persian king's permission to go himself to Jerusalem and rebuild its walls, the task which he felt was God-given. Then he used great tact in presenting the matter to the king's attention, and won his suit.

Nehemiah's Midnight Ride around the Walls. Dean Stanley gives an account of this ride in graphic words. "It was in the darkness of the night that he, on his mule or ass, accompanied by a few followers on foot, descended into the ravine of Hinnom, and threaded his way in and out among the gigantic masses of ruin and rubbish through that memorable circuit, familiar now to every traveler like the track of his native village. Each point that Nehemiah reaches is recorded by him as with the thrill inspired by the sight of objects long expected, and afterwards long remembered—the Spring of the Dragon; the gate outside of which lay the piles of the sweepings and offscourings of the

streets; the masses of fallen masonry, extending as it would seem, all along the western and northern sides; the blackened gaps left where the gates had been destroyed by fire; till at last by the royal reservoir the accumulations became so impassable that the animal on which he rode refused to proceed. Then he turned, in the dead of night, along the deep shade of the Kidron water-course, looking up at the eastern wall, less ruinous than the rest, and so back once more by the gate that opened on the ravine of Hinnom. And now, having possessed himself with the full idea of the desolation, he revealed to his countrymen the whole of his plan, and portioned out the work among them. It was like the rebuilding of the wall of Athens after the invasion of Xerxes—like the building of the walls of Edinburgh after the battle of Flodden.—Dean Stanley, in "History of the Jewish Church."

Nehemiah's Character and Sympathies. Nehemiah's Memoirs reveal a strong personality, full of piety toward God and his people, with a power both of sincere prayer and the persuading of men; cut to the quick by the thought of the place of the graves of his fathers lying waste, but more concerned for the affliction and reproach of his living brethren, and with a consciousness, too, of their sins, especially toward the poor and the easily defrauded Levites. Without Isaiah's vision or Jeremiah's later patience, Nehemiah fulfils the prophetic ideal of the ruler, whose chief signs shall be that he draws breath in the fear of the Lord, that he defends the cause of the poor, that he has gifts of persuasion and inspiration, that he is quick to distinguish between the worthy and the evil, and that he does not spare the evil in their way. Nehemiah is everywhere dependent upon God, and conscious of the good hand of his God upon him. He has the strong man's power of keeping things to himself, but when the right moment comes he can persuade and lift the people to their work. He has a keen discernment of character and motive. He is intolerant of the indulgent, the compromising and the lazy, even when they are nobles—who, as he expresses it, "put not their necks to the work of the Lord." In the preparations for his mission and its first stages at Jerusalem he is thoroughly practical. In his account of his building he proves himself careful and true to detail. As he becomes familiar with the conditions under which he has been called to act, and gradually realizes how much he must do beyond the mere building of walls, the growth of his sense of the grandeur of his work is very beautiful; the sense of his loneliness not less pathetic.—Dr. George Adam Smith, in "Jerusalem."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

God governs the world according to natural laws: how can he interrupt these laws to answer prayer? This is a problem that troubles many older pupils. Nehemiah's prayer and its answer show how God grants a petition by enabling one to answer his own prayer. God works through human agencies. There are times when it seems that only by "interrupting natural laws" can a prayer be answered.

But what are "natural laws" except laws which we think we understand? Are there not laws which we fail to understand? Let those who are troubled by this seeming impossibility recall these words of a London scientist:

"A few years ago," he said to a physician who did not believe in prayer, "you did not believe in the X-ray. If any one had told you that there is light which can make the body transparent, so that you can see the bones in your hand, and the needle broken off within, you would have scoffed at the suggestion. But the X-ray has been there all these years of your unbelief. A few years ago, you did not believe in radium. You would have thought it unscientific to believe that the flame should not consume; that a substance does not burn itself up by its own shining. Now, however, you believe in radium—the very thing that once you would have denied as irrational. Believing in these things, you must remember that the X-ray and the radium have a therapeutic force which antedated your faith, and existed from the very beginning. And who are you, that you should believe the less and not believe the greater? Who are you that you deny that God can answer prayer?"

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Have you ever asked God to help you with your school lessons? Have you then put away your books and expected God to put into

your head the knowledge they contained without any studying on your part? That would have been very foolish, of course. There are people just as foolish as this, however, for they ask God to do things for them when he has given them the power to do these things for themselves. In our last lesson what did Nehemiah ask God to do for him? Today we see how he used the means at his command to help God answer that prayer. From whom did he want mercy? Why?

For Older Pupils. There is a stanza by Ella Wheeler Wilcox entitled "The Arrow and the Bow," which exactly befits our hero of these present lessons.

"A prayer without a deed is an arrow without a bow-string;
A deed without a prayer is a bow-string without an arrow.
The heart of a man should be like a quiver full of arrows,
And the hand of a man should be like a strong bow strung for action.
The heart of a man should keep his arrows ever ascending.
And the hand and the mind of a man should keep at a work unending."

If ever a man combined prayer and action, it was Nehemiah. Last week we saw him as a man of prayer. Today he appears both as a man of prayer and a man of action.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I PRAYER AND ACTION

Action Must Supplement Prayer. Prayer is behind our best work. An English writer illustrates this thought by recalling the man with the vessel of oil in his hand behind the wall of the Interpreter's House in the "Pilgrim's Progress." "As he cast the oil on the fire the flames leapt higher and higher. It is so with our active life and labor; there must be the constant feeding of the flame by the prayer of intercession. To pray and not to labor would be foolish, when God has entrusted us with power to be his co-workers. But to labor and not to pray is even more foolish, for his help is indispensable."

Nehemiah put prayer before action. Prayer strengthened him for action. But Nehemiah followed prayer with action. Had he uttered his petition and then waited passively in Susa for God to answer it without human helpers, the walls of Jerusalem had not arisen from their ruins. He prayed as if all depended on his prayer, and then he acted as if all depended on his action, as St. Ignatius of Loyola counsels.

"Well, God mend all!" said Lord Rea in 1630. "Nay," impatiently exclaimed Sir David Ramsay, "nay, Donald, we must help him mend it." In the presence of Hugh Price Hughes a rich man once prayed for a certain much-needed gift. "Well, my brother," said Mr. Hughes at the close of the prayer, "it is a grand thing to think that you can answer your own prayer on this occasion."

Prayer Must be Followed Up. I can imagine a listless, indolent person sitting within reach of a tumbler of water, and saying to the servant, "Hand me that tumbler of water"; and I can imagine some one giving the answer, "It is within your reach, take it if you want it. If it is worth having it is worth taking." There are many people who pray to God for things that are within their reach. All that is necessary is that they should find out how to procure them. There are some people who want their prayers answered at a jump, just as when we go to a post-office for our letters, they are handed right out to us; or just as when we go to the bank with a check, we receive the cash instantly. —Henry Ward Beecher.

A Small Boy's Lesson. "Bless the poor little children who haven't any beds tonight," prayed a little boy just before he lay down to sleep one cold, windy night.

His mother said: "You have just asked God to bless the poor children; now tell me what you will do to help them."

"Why, if I had a hundred cakes, enough for all the family, I would give them some."

"But you have no cakes. What, then, are you willing to do?"

The boy thought again. "I'll give them half my money. I have seven pennies. I'll give them four."—"Bible Society Gleanings."

"Prayer is the Preface to Work." A mission worker was walking through the poorer districts of London with a woman who was being helped by the

"parish relief" when the latter pointed to a comfortable looking house and said, "I wish we could all go to live in that house, and never have to fear being turned out because we cannot pay the rent."

"Well, let us pray about it," said the worker, and it was no merely pious phrase that she used. They prayed until they felt that they heard God's reply, and then the worker, like Nehemiah, sought the man who had the power to help her answer the prayer. She called four times upon the owner of the house before she found him in, and then she told her story and asked him to give the building as a home for poor women. "All right," the man promptly answered. "Take the house and use it in the way you suggest, and for just as long as you need it."

A Tribute to "Stonewall" Jackson's Prayer and Action. During the Civil War Jim, Stonewall Jackson's servant, was talking about his master's habit of prayer. "Yas, de Gen'l's a great man fo' prayin' at all times," he declared, and then he added: "But when I see him git up a great many times in de night an' go to prayin', den I know dar is gwine to be somethin' to pay, an' I go straight an' pack his haversack, 'cause I know he'll call fo' it de nex' mornin'!"

II NOT SAD IN HIS PRESENCE

A Great Virtue. This world would be revolutionized if every one should appear to others as Nehemiah always appeared to the king. He had never before been sad in his presence. True, in this one instance his countenance was sad, so noticeably sad that Artaxerxes questioned him about it, saying, "This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." But Nehemiah had an object in letting the king, for once, note his sadness: he must obtain the king's permission to leave his court and go to Jerusalem, and must secure the king's letters of safe conduct on the way, and his orders to the keeper of the forest for wood in building the gates of the wall. He had meditated long as to how he could best make known his desire to the king, and he had evidently reached the conclusion that he would let the king know that his heart was burdened, and let him question him about it. True, he was "sore afraid" when the moment came, for so much was at stake, but it was the moment for which he had planned, and ably he used it.

"No one has any more right to go through life unhappy than he has to go through it ill-bred," says Robert Louis Stevenson. And well we know that the great writer practiced what he preached, radiating good cheer everywhere and always. Call to mind what his life was, how bravely he fought his battle against pain and discouragement and how he never burdened others with his burdens, and his words will have double force for you.

Keep Your Troubles to Yourself. What can be more unkind than to communicate our low spirits to others, to go about the world like demons, poisoning the fountains of joy? Have I more light because I have managed to involve those I love in the same gloom as myself? Is it not pleasant to see the sun shining on the mountains, even though we have none of it down in our valley? Oh, the littleness and the meanness of that sickly appetite for sympathy, which will not let us keep our sorrows to ourselves! Let us hide our pains and sorrows. But, while we hide them, let them also be spurs within us to urge us on to all manner of overflowing kindness and sunny humor to those around us. When the very darkness within us creates a sunshine around us, then has the spirit of Jesus taken possession of our souls.—Frederick W. Faber.

Fly the Flag! There was once a young woman who fretted about everything. It is true that she was sick, unsuccessful and poor. People were always failing her, troubles were always multiplying. Her friends used to say it took courage to go to see her, they were so sure of being met by a complaint. This went on, says the narrator of her story in "Harper's Bazar," until she was thirty.

Then one day she read the story of a great naval disaster, when the officers, knowing that their ship must go down before the enemy, set the band to playing, the flags to flying, and, dressed in uniform, with their white gloves on, waited to go down with their ship. As she read the story she suddenly grew ashamed of herself. How had *she* met disaster? Never with anything but tears and complaints.

"I won't be as I have been any more," she said to herself. "When troubles come to me, though I perish as those officers did, I will meet them as they did—with flags flying, the band playing, and my white gloves on."

Ever so many troubles did come to her, but every time she met a new one she told herself: "The flags must fly today, the band play, and you must have your white gloves on!" Sometimes, when a disappointment in work seemed especially keen, she would even actually dress herself up in her best clothes and with smiling face go out to see a sick friend or to perform some act of cheerful kindness.

And now, after ten years, if you were to meet her, you would say she was sailing only smooth and pleasant seas. Good things come to her, she does not know why. She is a gentle, considerate, genial woman, whom every one loves. People call her fortunate, and only the other day some fretful woman said to her: "Oh, it's well enough for you to talk, you who have never known trouble in your life."

"A trouble in my life!" the cheerful woman said to herself, and stopped to think. "A trouble! Perhaps not; but now, at any rate, those which I thought I had seem no longer to have belonged to me, but to some other person who lived centuries ago!"—"Youth's Companion."

III A MAN WITH A MISSION

There was Come a Man to Seek the Welfare of the Children of Israel. Nehemiah was called to a great work. He had a very definite mission over in Judah. He knew exactly what must be done, and he knew that he was the man to do it, and he knew how he was going to work to accomplish his mission. In those days a city without a wall was at the mercy of all its enemies, and therefore the wall must be built. The difficulties in the way of its accomplishment would have discouraged a less determined man. But his purpose became with him a passion, and he who gave him this purpose gave him the power to carry it through.

How to Test One's Life Purpose. How can we tell whether the secret purpose hidden away in our heart's deepest desire is implanted by God? If we could be sure about that we could go steadily forward, fronting any storm. Look at the purpose in your heart, the one thing which, if you could, you would supremely desire to do. Can you pray about it? A man who desired above all else to get on in his business was talking to a clergyman in a train. They were strangers to each other, and, being alone in the car, had drifted into a conversation about Providence. "Well," said the clergyman, "do you pray for success in your business?" "No," said the man, "I am not quite sure that God wants business in my line to succeed." A sturdy old Baptist pastor of the last century used to describe himself as "John Knott, blacksmith, by the grace of God." If your vocation is God-given, it ought to be easy to talk to your heavenly Father about it.

If our heart's purpose were accomplished, would it be for the good of others as well as ourselves? That is a sensible test. The Lord does not put selfish aims into his servants' hearts. He is not the inspirer of greed. Any success that injures our fellows is not in accord with the mind of Christ. No man liveth to himself, or for himself alone. We are not only ends, we are means; members one of another; separate as the ripples on the surface, but one as the water in the lake.

Would the accomplishment of our purpose be for God's glory? Nehemiah was satisfied that his aim was a seed of the Divine planting. It was readily turned into prayer, it was for the help of others, its end was the Divine glory. Is it for these reasons we desire our church work to prosper? Is it for these reasons we desire to attain our purpose? If so, we need have no doubts as to the origin of our aim. Every good desire is born of the Holy Spirit—Thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Bend all your energy to its accomplishment. Trust in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy heart's desire.—John C. Carlile, in a Sermon.

Not Lighted Up. In the "Life of Sir Walter Scott" by Lockhart, there occurs a remark made by Sir Walter that has often come back to me in quiet moments. It was on the occasion when Lockhart first met Scott, at a small gathering of friends in Edinburgh, and after dinner the talk fell on living poets, with many of whom Scott was on terms of intimacy. A gentleman present was lamenting that he had never seen Byron, and Scott fell to talking on the beauty of Byron's face. "Doctor," he said, "the prints give you no idea of it: the lustre is there, but it is not lighted up." I confess that

I have been haunted by that sentence—the lustre is there, but it is not lighted up.

I apply this thought to human character, to the men and women we meet with daily; for I think that one of the saddest facts in life is just this fact of the unlighted lustre. I daresay most of us have had one school-fellow from whom we expected very brilliant things; he was so able, so quick, he worked with such charming ease that we thought that by and by he could do anything. Ah, well, the years have been slipping by since then, and somehow the schoolmate has done nothing yet, and we meet him occasionally and he is always brilliant—the lustre is there, there is no doubt of it: but the man's whole life is going to be a failure because the lustre has not been lighted up. No purpose or passion has infused his character. No spark of the fire that is from heaven has kindled him. He has never set himself to face life's duties in the brave spirit of an earnest man, and all the gifts that might have meant so much, and all the graces that never come to anything, and the boundless possibilities of common hearts that only want one touch to kindle them—such things, and the love that can never show itself, are the unlighted lustre of the soul.—G. H. Morrison, in "The Unlighted Lustre."

Missions and Omissions. Life without a mission is life with a tremendous omission. To leave off life's mission would be like leaving off the flanges of the engine's wheels or the rudder on the ship. Direction would be lost. Mate Frank Bullen tells us, in his sea stories, that a cruel sport is to catch a shark, and after cutting off its ventral fins to return it to the water. It has no longer any power to direct its course, all its convulsive efforts merely send it shooting wildly to the surface. Even so do we treat our lives who would destroy the purpose, the mission, in them. Those who tell us we can do nothing and are going nowhere are both false and cruel. The Divine voice tells us that there is a baptism to be baptized with, and that we are straitened until it is accomplished. Nothing is more deadly to a true life than the omission of its mission.—"Sunday School Times."

Missionless.

Like some instrument of music
Made with great exceeding skill,
Formed for sounds of sweetest rhythm,
Lying always mute and still,
Left where no man knows the secret
Of a single noble chord,
Melody for ever silent,
Is thy life without the Lord.

Incomplete as some rich setting,
Finely chased, of purest gold;
Left without the priceless jewel
It was made alone to hold;
Useless as some hidden treasure
When none knew the magic word
To unlock the secret chamber,
Is thy life without thy Lord.

Thou, created for his glory,
Is thy purpose unfulfilled?
Have thy heart's deep chords of music
Never by his touch been thrilled?
Is thy soul without its jewel?
Is thy power a hidden hoard?
Is thy spirit dead within thee?
Is thy life without thy Lord?

—Unknown.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 2. We ought, from a principle of Christian sympathy, to concern ourselves in the sorrows and sadness of others, even of our inferiors, and not say, "What is it to us?"—Matthew Henry.

Verse 4. He who prays much and long in secret can lift up his heart anywhere.—F. B. Meyer.

Verse 4. I fell into the habit years ago of talking with God, and it becomes so natural that in all my open spaces I do it without thought.—Horace Bushnell.

Verse 4.

And what is prayer? A Godward thought,
By which the soul near him is brought.—M. D. Tolman.

Verse 5. "In essential Christianity one cannot separate the gift from the giver: to be truly Christlike is to give one's self."

Verse 5. Set yourself earnestly to see what you were made to do, and then set yourself earnestly to do it: and the loftier your purpose is, the surer you will be to make the world richer with every enrichment of yourself.—Phillips Brooks.

Verse 5. Patriotism is not singing songs about your country, but doing deeds for it.—Newton H. Marshall.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS TO US

A measure of responsibility rests upon each one for the answer of his own prayer. Our earnest prayer and our earnest effort should go hand in hand.

Let us adopt Nehemiah's rule and make it general in its application, striving never to be sad in anyone's presence, for (as Ripley D. Saunders says)

Just being happy
Is a fine thing to do;
Looking on the bright side
Rather than the blue;
Sad or sunny musing
Is largely in the choosing,
And just being happy
Is brave work and true.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How prayer is answered. See "The Outlook," March 29, 1913, p. 704.
2. What can the patriot today do for our country?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is thought to have been the occasion for this Psalm? (*Guide*, p. 420.) 2. What is the explanation of the figure of speech in the fifth verse? (*Guide*, p. 419.) 3. Read Isa. 40.31. 4. Where else in the Bible are the words of verse 8 found? (*Guide*, p. 419.) 5. With verse 9 compare Isa. 57.16. 6. To what verse in Genesis is verse 14 an allusion? (Gen. 2.7.) 7. With verse 16 compare Job 7.10. 8. Which one of the commandments is recalled by verse 17? 9. Read Whittier's poem entitled "The Eternal Goodness," and copy the stanzas you like best.

Questions to Think About. 1. Why is this Psalm an appropriate lesson for today? 2. What does the first verse of the Psalm mean? 3. What common cause of ingratitude is suggested in the second verse? 4. How does God "heal all our diseases"? (*Guide*, p. 418.) 5. Is our appreciation of God's benefits dulled by their regularity? 6. What are some of our blessings which our short memories are liable to forget? 7. Could we have a Thanksgiving Day three hundred and sixty-five times in the year? 8. What special reasons for thanksgiving has our nation?

Questions upon the Book of Nehemiah. 1. When and by whom were the books of Ezra and Nehemiah separated? 2. What part of the book of Nehemiah did Nehemiah write? 3. Why could he not have written the remainder of the book? 4. Who probably brought together Nehemiah's memoirs and the "State Documents"? 5. When did Nehemiah probably write his memoirs? 6. When was the whole book written? 7. What period of history is covered by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah? 8. How much time is passed over in silence between the end of Ezra and the beginning of Nehemiah? 9. What information do we gain from the book of Nehemiah? 10. What peculiarities has the writing? 11. What lessons for today has it? (For answers to these questions, see pages 33-35 of our Introduction.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the 103d Psalm. Write "XVIII. Nehemiah's Prayer Answered."

A PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

Golden Text

Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Psalm 103.2

LESSON Psalm 103 MEMORIZE verses 8-10

1 Bless Jehovah, O my soul; and all that is within me, *bless his holy name.*
 2 Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4 who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5 who satisfieth thy desire with good things, *so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.* 6 Jehovah executeth righteous acts, and judgments for all that are oppressed. 7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his doings unto the children of Israel. 8 Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness. 9 He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. 17 But the lovingkindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18 to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his precepts to do them. 19 Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 20 Bless Jehovah, ye his angels, that are mighty in strength, that fulfil his word, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 21 Bless Jehovah, all ye his hosts, Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. 22 Bless Jehovah, all ye his works, in all places of his dominion: *bless Jehovah, O my soul.*

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Psalmist's Gratitude and Praise for God's Mercies, 1-5.
- II. God's Revelation of his Pity and Love, 6-10.
- III. God's Greatness and Tenderness Limitless, 11-14.
- IV. Man is Short-lived, but God's Mercy Endures Forever, 15-18.
- V. Ascription of Praise to God as the Universal King, 19-22.

1. *O my soul.* That is, myself. The Psalmist thus addresses himself. "The Semitic languages have no word for 'self.' If the Syriac has to render 'a kingdom divided against itself,' it says 'a kingdom divided against its soul;' if it has to render 'yourselves,' it must needs say 'your souls.'"—*All that is within me.* My whole self, my whole being.—*Bless his holy name.* As we have often noted, *name* stands for person: *bless him who is holy.*

2. *Bless Jehovah.* "I believe thanksgiving to be a greater mark of holiness than any other part of worship" (McLeod).—*Forget not all his benefits.* Forget none of them. Do not take them for granted. How often is forgetfulness the cause of ingratitude!

3. In the two clauses of this verse and the first clause of the next, Professor Drummond notes in the last part of each three facts of similarity—the guilt of sin, the stain of sin, and the power of sin: and in the first part of each three facts of salvation—forgiveness, healing and redemption.—*Iniquities.* Crookedness, sin. "God's benefits will not be before our eyes unless our sins be also before our eyes" (Augustine, quoted by Perowne).—*Who healeth all thy diseases.* "Is not the recuperative power of nature God's own healing touch? Had he not endowed our bodies with that which restores them from accident

and sickness, no bone would ever set, no wound ever close, no patient ever recover. And so it is with the deeper maladies of the soul" (Watkinson).

4. *Thy life.* Thyself.—*Destruction.* Or, *the pit*, RVm. "It stands for Sheol, which is here pictured as claiming the Psalmist when he was on the point of dying: but Jehovah paid, as it were, the ransom, and so brought him back to life and health. *Redeem*, or *ransom*, is here used figuratively" (Davies).—*Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness.* "God's goodness is not like the barometer—sometimes high, sometimes low, sometimes doubtful. It is the constant quality on which we can ever rely."

5. *Thy desire.* Or, *thy years*, RVm.—*So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.* Compare Isa. 40.31: "They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." The eagle is thought of as the most vigorous of birds.

6. *Judgments for all that are oppressed.* As in the deliverance from Babylon. His delivery is thought of as a judgment on the oppressors.

7. *He made known his ways unto Moses.* "Make known to me, I pray thee, thy ways," had been the prayer of Moses, Ex. 33.13, and in Ex. 34, 6, 7, it is written: "And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth; keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."

8. A quotation from Ex. 34.6. Found also in Ps. 86.5, 15; 145.8; Joel 2.13; Neh. 9.17.

9. Compare Isa. 57.16. Although God is slow to anger, yet he must punish sinners, and thus he is thought of as showing anger, which, nevertheless, does not last for ever.

11. *So great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him.* It is as vast as the universe.

12. *As far as the east is from the west.* East and west stand here for distance greater than the imagination can conceive.

14. *He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.* An allusion to Gen. 2.7: "And Jehovah God formed man out of the dust of the ground." The Hebrew noun translated *frame* is derived from the Hebrew verb translated *formed*. "He knoweth our frame": the Bible abounds in such gracious and tender words. 'He remembered us in our low estate.' 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' 'He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.' The burden is suited to our strength. The revelation is determined by our experience. The pace is regulated to our years" (Jowett).

15. *His days are as grass.* Few in number.—*As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.* The flower of the field quickly withers.

16. *The wind.* Alluding to the east, or the south, wind in Palestine which comes from over the desert and is scorching.—*And the place thereof shall know it no more.* See Job. 7.10.

17-18. See Ex. 20.6.

19. *Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens.* "In my childhood I used to sing, 'There's a Friend for little children, Above the bright blue sky,' I know better now. He is nearer to me than I can dream. I used to sing, 'There is a happy land, Far, far away.' Now I sing, 'There is a happy land, Not far away.' The good Father and his home are not in some remote realm. They are very, very near to me" (Jowett).—*His kingdom ruleth over all.* Therefore in the next verses the Psalmist calls upon celestial beings to praise him. Thy kingdom come.

21. *All ye his hosts.* "The subordinate members of the company that wait upon God."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.* The fable of the eagle's renewing its youth is as follows: The eagle mounts aloft into heaven till he comes near to the seat of the central fire in the sun, when, scorched by the heat, he casts himself down into the sea. Thence he emerges again with new vigor and fresh plumage, till at last in his hundredth year he perishes in the waves.

12. *As far as the east is from the west.* As thought traveled westward in ancient times it saw the dim coasts and islands of the Mediterranean, and per-

haps the mountain of Teneriffe in the farthest distance. As it traveled eastward, it passed through the ring of neighboring nations across the Jordan; saw the wandering encampments of desert tribes; then Mesopotamia, with Nineveh and Babylon guarding its rivers; then the mountains of Persia, and the dream-like lands of India and China beyond. At the utmost limits, mountain-pillars upheld the world, or the edge of its oval disc fell sheer into the waters on the nether deep upon which it floated.

One can realize the wonder and relief of such a man as this writer, as his conscience follows his imagination across the whole enormous breadth of the world. There, where the mountains of the dawn or sunset hardly break the skyline with their faint and shadowy outlines—there, over the edges of the flat earth where all things end—there, and no nearer, are his sins. From such an one sin, and its wages of death, are indeed very far away.—John Kelman, in "Ephemera Eternitatis."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What earlier lessons have we had from the Psalms? What is the thought of Psalm 85? Of Psalm 126? What special reason for giving thanks to God had the people of Judah in the times we are studying?

The Theme and Date of Our Psalm. This is a beautiful, tender Psalm of thanksgiving and praise to God for all his great mercies, mercies shown to the Psalmist individually and to his nation. Certain peculiarities of language have led scholars to refer it to the early years after the return from exile. Because of their sins, the people had been taken into captivity, but God had forgiven them and delivered them, and the Psalmist sings his hymn of praise.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What day is next Thursday? Why do we keep the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day? The day carries our thoughts back to Governor Bradford and the early perils of the Pilgrims, and then on through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars to the present period of peace and prosperity, and then onward still to the years of greatness for our country that are yet to come. Each year the President of the United States and the Governors of the States issue their thanksgiving proclamations weighted with devout words acknowledging the nation's debt to the Divine Ruler of all, and on Thanksgiving Day prayers of gratitude and praise are offered in the churches throughout our land for the way in which the Lord has led us. Today we study a beautiful Psalm of Thanksgiving written, probably, after the return from exile. What number is the Psalm? Let us repeat it in concert.

For Older Pupils. For several years nothing had been heard of Livingstone in Africa. Then Stanley was sent to find him, and when at last the great missionary was found he had only three faithful men with him and all his stores were gone. Stanley went on to the coast for men and supplies, and for five long months Livingstone waited. When help finally reached him, Livingstone wrote in his Journal: "How thankful I am I cannot express. It is well that the men who were with Mr. Stanley came again to me. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.'"

These beautiful words from the 103d Psalm have been uttered by countless numbers of thankful hearts from the time it was written until now. What do the first five verses affirm?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE INFINITE GOODNESS OF GOD

The Eternal Goodness. Could Whittier have written "The Eternal Goodness" had he not known the One Hundred and Third Psalm? Read the whole poem, from which these three stanzas are taken:

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

God Ever Good. One lovely spring morning I went into the garden of a friend of mine. The sun was shining, the larks were singing, and the dew was sparkling on leaf and grass-blade, and the air was fragrant with the breath of the flowers. The gardener said to me, "God is very good to us at this time of the year, is he not, sir?" I smiled and replied, "God is not only good to us at this time of the year, but during the whole of the year—as good when the snow falls and the bleak winds of winter blow as when the sunshine and the garden glow with summer glory. God's goodness is not like the barometer—sometimes high, sometimes low, sometimes doubtful. It is the constant quality on which we can ever rely. His mercy is everlasting."—"Sunday School Chronicle."

God's Tender Mercies. In the life of Pastor Herder, whose flock were wood-carvers and chamois-hunters in the high Alps, we are told of a singular system of religious festivals which he invented. Each of his people kept a record of the great crises in his own life, the days when God had most blessed him, and celebrated them as holidays in the original sense of the word, that is, as holy days.

All of his neighbors observed them with him. Thus, one day little presents of milk or flowers were sent to Father Sigel, because on that day five years ago he recovered from a stroke of apoplexy. The next day every one would shake hands with Fritz Hemel, because it was the anniversary of his rescue when the avalanche swept him away. The man whose fête-day it was laid flowers upon the altar and praised God for all the mercies bestowed on him. So it came to pass at last that almost every day in the year was a thanksgiving in which these poor people recognized God's hand leading them tenderly through their hard, bare lives.

"I believe," says John Dennison, "that one of God's messengers, a power sent by him, has been always present with me to guide my way. But there have been times when he has come so close, to turn me away from evil or to bless me, that I could almost feel his touch. Shall I not keep those days holy, and tell my children of them?" Jacob in his journeyings set up an altar to God when any special happiness came to him upon the spot where he had been blessed.

In the little town of Charleville, in Ireland, there is an old graveyard, the date of which is lost in the mist of past ages. In one corner, among the broken crosses and holly-trees, a limpid spring jets out of a rock. The guide tells the stranger in a reverent whisper that it is the "Holy Well" healing water left there by some long dead saint for the help of the poor. The people still carry their aged folk or sick children to drink the water, which perhaps has some strong medicinal quality, as many seem to be healed by it. Upon the bushes around, or on the stone wall, hang thousands of poor little offerings, each with a name. Sometimes the gift is only a rag, but it tells the same story of gratitude.

How many thanksgivings do we keep in the year?—"Youth's Companion."

II COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Her Thanksgiving Day Sermon.

Now, Dan'el, this is Thanksgivin'—a day when the good Lord meant That we should set down an' think over the blessin's he has sent,
An' give him the credit that's due him for the good things he bestows;
But you've got into the habit, as every one round you knows,
Of findin' fault with most things an' overlookin' the good,
An' you don't thank the Giver for 'em as a decent Christian should.

Now, Dan'el, I'm goin' to be honest an' tell you, plain an' square,
What I think about your grumblin'—you don't use the good Lord fair.
You fret 'cause the corn was a failure; you worry about the grass,
But never a word, my husban', about the dear little lass
That the Lord in his merciful kindness gave back when we thought she must die.
What's all the corn in the country, an' everything else, say I,
To the child that the Lord has spared us? So, if you are bound to complain,
Act honest, an' give God the credit for your blessin's as well as your pain.

You know just as well as I do that the sun doesn't always shine,
But all our frettin' an' worry won't clear your sky or mine.
It's a good deal better, my husban', to take things as they be,
When we can't make 'em any different, as sensible folks agree.
If a thing can't be helped, don't worry, but make the best of it, dear,
An' think about all life's good things till the cloudy sky gets clear.
It's foolish an' wicked—yes, wicked—I say it out plain an' square—
To look at the dark side always. 'Tain't usin' the good Lord fair.

What if the corn *was* a failure? We'd a good big crop of wheat,
An' with that, an' the meat, an' potatoes, we're sure of enough to eat.
You don't expect everythin', do you? Things might ha' been worse, my dear.
Think how we'd feel, my husban', if our little girl wasn't here.
Be honest an' give the Lord, then, the credit he ought to get.
Just reckon up all your blessin's an' you'll find you're deep in his debt.
You'll see you ain't actin' right, Dan'el, to look on the dark side so.
Give him the credit that's due him an' you'll have a Thanksgivin', I know.

—Eben E. Rexford.

Mr. Witherspoon's Thanksgiving. It seemed to Mr. Witherspoon that he had not much reason to observe Thanksgiving Day. Business was bad, and showed no signs of improving. Mr. Witherspoon was not discouraged or embittered, but he was not feeling particularly thankful when a telephone message came asking for the use of his automobile on Thanksgiving morning.

"Certainly you may have it, Florence," he answered. He was an obliging man, and the young lady was a neighbor's daughter, and a teacher in the Sunday-school. Then he remembered that the chauffeur had Thanksgiving Day off; he must run the car himself.

Mr. Witherspoon would have liked another hour of sleep on Thanksgiving morning; but he rose at half-past six, drank a cup of coffee, and ran out his automobile.

"It's so good of you to go with us, Mr. Witherspoon!" said Florence Weeks. "Fred and Marie and I delivered baskets last night till our arms ached, and we simply could not get through."

An automobile is not often seen in the part of the city to which they went; the car was soon surrounded by children, who followed it from place to place. Mr. Witherspoon let them ride, and they hung to the car from every projection. When they came to the last place, Mr. Witherspoon said: "Fred, you've carried all the baskets. Let me go in here."

Inside the forlorn rear tenement-house was a dimly lighted room, made darker by the forty children outside who were pressing their faces against the windows. In the room was an overworked mother with eight children, the youngest of whom lay in the bed with his sick father. There was no sign of any dinner, and when the basket appeared the family visibly showed its relief.

"This is our friend, Mr. Witherspoon, who is helping us," said Florence. "Children, can you sing a song for him?"

The children sang, with the potatoes keeping time as the mother dropped them from the basket into the pan:

"Count your blessings,
Name them one by one;
Count your many blessings,
See what God hath done!"

"Count your blessings." Nineteen potatoes, thirteen apples, two chickens, two pies, and various other good things; they were worth counting, to be sure! But the song caused a lump to rise in Mr. Witherspoon's throat.

As the visitors stepped outside, they heard the song again; for the children there had caught it up, and were singing lustily:

"Count your many blessings,
See what God hath done!"

"See here, Florence," said Mr. Witherspoon, "can we find a market open here somewhere? I'd like to do some more of this!"

He was late to his Thanksgiving dinner that day, but he had never eaten one with a heart more humbly thankful.—"Youth's Companion."

Thanksgiving Acceptable to God. There is one thanksgiving which is simply and solely for good food and drink. It is to be feared that many boys who have grown to maturity have still the boy's conception of Thanksgiving Day as just a day for a "big feed." All spiritual or moral value of the day is overshadowed by turkey and dressing. If our spirit of praise doesn't get any higher than the Thanksgiving board, our Thanksgiving might be called a "Thanks-for-what-I've-got-to-eat Thanksgiving," and, surely, there is "a more excellent way."

A little higher in the scale of thanksgiving promptings may be put the giving of thanks for bigger business and better crops. As people think of the rise in salary since last November, or the growth in the "profit and loss" column in the trial balance each month of the year, or the bumper harvest of wheat, potatoes, or corn they had, they are full of thanks. This sort of motive for thanksgiving produces what we might call the "Thanks-for-what-I-have-got-more Thanksgiving," and is not wholly wrong. When God fills our barn with plenty we ought to praise him from whom all blessings flow. But there is a finer way.

Another very common cause for the thankful spirit is reflection on what deliverance God has wrought. It is the thanksgiving generated by reflection on what might have been, what awful fate might have befallen, if God had not granted deliverance. When thanksgiving is produced by this motive it might be termed a "Thanks-for-what-I-was-spared Thanksgiving." And rightly should we remember him who is our Deliverer in all our afflictions; but there surely must be a higher way.

Better than any of these reasons for giving thanks to God is a simple recognition of the fatherhood and faithfulness of God. On a higher plane of thanksgiving than for food, gain, or deliverance, is the gratitude of a trusting, filial, joyous confidence in God, his being, his goodness, and his wisdom. This is the more excellent way.—Condensed from an article in the "Zion's Herald."

III THANKING GOD

Ancient Thanksgiving Proclamations. Three thousand years ago a king of Israel wrote a succession of thanksgiving proclamations. Take only two of them, the 104th and the 105th Psalms,—and it is significant that they are consecutive,—can we find a nobler expression of the spirit of thankfulness in any modern utterance? "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man"; "Oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart"; "The earth is full of thy riches"; "Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good."

It is an enumeration of the things that blessed Israel in bin and barrel, and yet quite as truly a summary of the bodily comfort that culminates at our own Thanksgiving table.

But then comes a reckoning of God's goodness to the nation—the covenant that gave them the land of Canaan: "When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it."

"And they went about from nation to nation, from one [kingdom] to another people.

He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes."

And there follows a list of the nation's great leaders, and of their services.

Does it not fit our own story? Does it not recall our own leaders? Shall it not set us to thinking of our own reasons for being thankful? Better than any

State Governor, or any President of the United States, King David calls us to a service that is the highest pleasure.—"Youth's Companion."

The Habit of Praise. The attitude of praise is a characteristically Christian attitude. It goes with faith and hope and love. It does not depend upon surroundings; for an attitude is a thing taken toward surroundings, and not a part of them. Praise to God does not depend upon other men. Praise of God's goodness does not depend upon what opportunities the world may offer. The Christian who chooses the habit of praise can practice it all the while, for it depends only upon the presence and love of God, which are everlasting.

Praise teaches the soul, daily, to look beyond the day. If this world were all, praise might sometimes falter. But God's purposes are eternal. The contemplation of God's promises and his love leads the heart on to thoughts far beyond earthly disappointments or trials. Even though the worst happens, God is still in his Heaven, and his children are traveling there every day. The partings of mortality are not hopeless, because immortality will reunite souls for ever, beyond all parting. There is no conceivable crisis in which the faithful Christian may not find praise to lift to God.

No heart full of praise can be small or narrow or powerless. Praise is the language of Heaven, the speech of the angels. The prayer of petition is for the beginner in the Christian life—but the prayer of praise is the mark of the saint. The glory of God shines down daily and hourly into the hearts of those who praise him, and so they always have light, no matter how dark their surroundings. Every Christian can attain to the attitude of praise.—Mark L. Prentiss.

A Thanksgiving Service for the Sunday-School. Several years ago Frederica Beard wrote an article for "The Sunday School Times" about "How to Celebrate Thanksgiving Day." In it she gave the following program for a Thanksgiving Service on the Sunday previous to Thanksgiving Day which is too good to be lost, for it might be made very impressive and helpful in many a Sunday-school.

Imagine a Sunday-school gathered together in a room decorated with the symbols of the harvest ingathering. After a few strains of quieting and reverential music, the superintendent reads the President's proclamation. Then follows the singing of the grand old "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." This is not so often heard in Sunday-school as it should be. M. R. Hofer has well said, "To begin a program with the Doxology seems stupidly old-fashioned and slow. Yet, as a matter of fact, the children of today need to be taught the Doxology as they need to be taught to spell and cipher and other minor matters of education. Old Hundred is not yet worn out, although sung by centuries of Christians. If you want to give children a real thrill, teach them the Doxology. It is just their kind, a simple, broad melody for them to lay hold of, and extract good from."

The program continues with the sentences contained in the first four verses of Psalm 103, recited antiphonally from the opposite sides of the room. "O Give Thanks unto the Lord," is then sung by a chorus of girls. The interest of the children is held by the older ones reading a few lines of Psalm 136, while in between the lines, the younger ones repeat the refrain, "For his loving kindness endureth forever." All join in singing,

"We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed o'er the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's Almighty hand."

Nothing can be better than this with its tune of the old church processional.

Two people, especially fitted for such work, then tell two short stories. The first story is the simpler one, and is of the old-time offering of the first-fruits, and the sacrifice upon the altar, with which is used a copy of that beautiful picture, "Religion," by Sargent. The second story is "The Vision of Sir Launfal" in an abbreviated form.

After these stories are told, a representative from each class brings to "the altar" an offering in money, or a little written plan for a dinner to be taken to a poor family the day before Thanksgiving. A committee is appointed to buy the dinners and distribute them for those classes who cannot do this themselves, but wherever possible let each class do its own work. Reports of visits

made are given the next Sunday, and the total offering of the school announced. The pastor then leads in a short and fitting prayer.

The younger children are given sealed envelopes, "to be opened at Thanksgiving breakfast." In these envelopes are cards on which are written Bible verses about giving thanks.

Such a program as the above must be planned by superintendent and teachers in advance, and the cooperation of some of the pupils gained. Under capable leadership the older boys and girls may serve in the decoration of the room. The more they can be actively at work, the greater will be the good done.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. Little do we know how we wrong ourselves by shutting out of our prayers the praises of God.—Richard Baxter.

Verse 2. It is the man who feathers the arrows of his petitions with gratitude and thanksgiving whose prayers carry farthest.—J. Stuart Holden.

Verse 12. A Greek poet implies that the height of bliss is the sudden relief from pain; there is a nobler bliss still, the rapture of the conscience at the sudden release from a guilty thought.—Lord Lytton.

Verse 20. Shall the heart of him who is a little lower than the angels be out of tune with the music of the spheres, the birds, the zephyrs, and the great chorus of creation?—E. W. Caswell.

Verse 22. Thanksgiving makes our prayers bold and strong and sweet; feeds and enkindles them as with coals of fire.—Martin Luther.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

I believe that God forgives all my iniquities, heals all my diseases, redeems my life from destruction, crowns me with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and fills my years with good so that my youth is renewed like the eagle, not because I read the story of this experience in the Psalms, but because I experience it in my own life; but perhaps I should never have experienced it in my own life if I had not first read it in the Psalms.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Our Prayer. Our Father, in this time of gladness we turn anew to thee. The earth has given us grain and fruit in overflowing fullness. Thy rainbow promise has been kept another year. Sunshine and cloud, rain and dew, the rhythm of seasons, of day and night, have not failed. We thank thee. For the precious common things we thank thee, for bread and bed, shelter and raiment, fireside with all its sweets, for love and friendship, for work and rest, for the rare privileges of prayer and sympathetic service, of giving, and of brotherhood with all the world. Most of all we thank thee for our Lord Jesus, who died for us, through whom all these things come.—S. D. Gordon.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The duty of praise.
2. The Psalms. See pages 49-50 of the 1915 *Guide*.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read chapters 2-7. 2. How did Nehemiah induce the Jews in Jerusalem to take hold of the work of rebuilding the walls? (Neh. 2.9-20.) 3. How did he show his shrewdness? 4. What method did he follow in the building? (Neh. 3.1-32.) 5. What means did his enemies use in attempts to stop the work? (Neh. 4.1-11.) 6. How was the work hindered by faint-heartedness? 7. What precautions did Nehemiah take against surprise? (Neh. 4.12-23.) 8. In what other ways were attempts made to thwart Nehemiah in his purpose? (*Guide*, p. 428.) 9. Who were the Arabians, Ammonites and Ashdodites? (*Guide*, p. 429.) 10. How long did it take to build the walls? (Neh. 6.15.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What counsel of Jesus does verse 9 recall (Watch and pray.) 2. What is the meaning of verse 12? (*Guide*, p. 427.) 3. When would the trumpet be sounded, verse 18? 4. What qualities of leadership were shown by Nehemiah? 5. Does it require bravery to endure ridicule? 6. Which do you think must have been the harder for Nehemiah to endure, the threats of the enemy or the discouragement of the Jews? 7. Why did Nehemiah regard the building of the walls of Jerusalem as a work for God? 8. What patriotic work is needed today which would be a work for God?

NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

Golden Text

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me? Heb. 13.6

LESSON Nehemiah 4: verses 7-21 printed MEMORIZE verses 17, 18

7 But it came to pass that, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth; 8 and they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein. 9 But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. 10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. 11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. 12 And it came to pass that, when the Jews that dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us. 13 Therefore set I in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places, I set *there* the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. 16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that half of my servants wrought in the work, and half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. 17 They that builded the wall and they that bare burdens laded themselves; every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other held his weapon; 18 and the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. 19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another: 20 in what place soever ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us; our God will fight for us.

21 So we wrought in the work; and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Opposition of Enemies, 1-9, 11.
 1. Ridicule, 1-6.
 2. Conspiracy, 7-9, 11.
- II. Trouble Within, 10, 12.
 1. Discouraged Workers, 10.
 2. Discouraging Friends, 12.
- III. Building and Battling, 13-21.

7. *Arabians, Ammonites, Ashdodites.* See the Geographical Background. "Common hatred has a wonderful power of uniting former foes" (Maclaren).—*The repairing of the walls went forward.* Heb. *healing went up upon the walls.* RVm: a Hebrew metaphor of bandages applied to a wound, explained by "the breaches began to be stopped."

8. *To cause confusion therein.* The coming of enemies would terrify the timid, work would be stopped, and "confusion" would result.

9. *But we made our prayer unto our God.* "To set a watch day and night; that is, to use the means appropriate for the ends which we desire to accomplish without a recognition of God's power and our own need, is the part of the Pharisee, who imagines himself able to accomplish needed results" (Blanchard).—*And set a watch against them.* Posted sentinels. "To pray and watch is the road to victory" (Blanchard).

10. *Judah.* The people of Judah.—*Bearers of burdens.* Those who cleared away the rubbish.—*Much rubbish.* See verse 2.—*So that we are not able to build the wall.* The complaint and discouragement of his own workers must have been even harder for Nehemiah to cope with than the hostility of his enemies.

12. *Dwelt by them.* By the adversaries, verse 11.—*Ten times.* Many times, again and again.—*From all places.* Either the Jews who lived in the neighborhood of the enemies and had just come to Jerusalem wished to have their townsmen who were helping in the rebuilding of the wall return and defend their own homes, or they deemed it futile to attempt to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and urged the workers to give up the attempt and to come and dwell with them.

13. *Therefore.* Forewarned, forearmed.—*With their swords, their spears, and their bows.* The arrows would be used when the enemies were at a distance, the spears when they drew near, and the swords in a hand-to-hand fight.

14. *I looked.* This may mean that he looked about, inspecting the defense, or that he saw in the distance the approach of the enemy and counseled fearless fight, which proved not necessary because the enemy retreated, as we infer from the next verse.—*Rulers.* Or, *deputies*, RVm.—*Be not afraid, remember the Lord.* "The only real antagonist of fear is faith" (Maclaren).—*And fight for your . . . houses.* What a splendid battle cry is this!

15. *It was known unto us.* Their plan for a sudden attack, verse 11.

16. *Half of my servants.* These were probably Nehemiah's bodyguard.—*The coats of mail.* See below.—*The rulers were behind all the house of Judah.* Their position was back of the builders, and when the trumpet sounded an alarm they would issue orders.

17. *They that bare burdens.* These must have been the removers of rubbish. Representations on Assyrian monuments show that in this age the heavy blocks were brought into position by means of rollers and pulleys.

18. *The builders.* They needed both hands for the work of laying the stones.—*Every one had his sword girded by his side.* "As a few years ago I saw Circassian immigrants building their houses from the ruins of Amman under fear of an Arab attack" (G. A. Smith).—*He that sounded the trumpet.* The alarm-call in case of attack, verse 20.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

16. *The coats of mail.* They probably consisted of metallic scales rounded at the bottom and squared at the top, and sewed on linen or felt. On a bas-relief at Nineveh are seen warriors with coats of scale armor which descend to the knees or ankles. In one of the palaces Layard discovered a number of scales used for this armor. Each scale was of iron two or three inches long, rounded at one end and squared at the other, with a raised or embossed line in the center, and some were inlaid with copper. At a later period the Assyrian armor was made of smaller scales, which were pointed and ornamented with raised figures, and the coat of mail reached no lower than the waist.—J. M. Freeman in "Bible Manners and Customs."

It is unlikely that the common soldiers wore heavy coats of mail. Their defensive armor probably consisted of tough leather doublets protecting the body down to the knees and leaving the arms bare. The hard, specially prepared hides of which they were made were almost impenetrable to the arrow.—Herbert Edward Ryle, in "Cambridge Bible."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What led Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem? What petition did he offer in his prayer to God? What request did he make of the king? How did he strengthen himself to make this request? What was the king's

answer? What did he do in Jerusalem three days after his arrival? How had the walls been destroyed?

Nehemiah Arouses the Jews to the Work of Rebuilding the Walls. Nehemiah began his mission in Jerusalem with great caution. After he had rested three days, before telling any one what God had put into his heart to do for Jerusalem, he rode forth in the dead of night to view the city walls that were broken down and the gates that were burned so that he might understand all the difficulties of the task confronting him. Next he summoned the leaders of the people and told them of the God-given purpose that had brought him to the city and of the authority given him by the Persian king, and urged them to undertake the work of rebuilding the wall. He received ready response: "Let us rise up and build."

Ezra Not Mentioned in Connection with the Rebuilding. It is strange that Nehemiah does not mention Ezra's work in connection with his account of the rebuilding of the walls. Yet neither Ezra's nor Nehemiah's records are complete. Many scholars think that the 27th instead of the 7th year of Artaxerxes was the date of Ezra's expedition and institution of the Law—between Nehemiah's two visits in 445 and 432 B.C.—and that on Nehemiah's arrival the walls were just as they had been left by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. If Ezra came before Nehemiah, "his frustrated labor no doubt prepared the way for the latter's success."

The People Organized for the Work. Nehemiah skilfully directed the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem. Around the wall, wherever it was broken down, every one over against his own house, he distributed forty or more groups of workers from Jerusalem and near-by cities, priests and merchants, apothecaries and goldsmiths, nobles and artisans. All worked with zeal—"they strengthened their hands for the good work."

The Opposition of Enemies. At first the enemies of the Jews, Sanballat and Tobiah, ridiculed the work. "What are these feeble Jews up to?" mockingly questioned Sanballat before his brethren and the army of Samaria. "Do they think they can do it all in a day? Do they expect to bring the stones to life out of these heaps of rubbish?" And Tobiah joined in the ridicule. "That stone wall which they are building," he said, "will be broken down if a fox tries to scale it." Their words were repeated to Nehemiah, and he appealed to God to judge them. Meanwhile the building went on and the wall was now half way up, for the people had a mind to work. Finding that their words of ridicule availed nothing, the enemies planned a surprise attack, but Nehemiah was on the watch and they could not carry out their plan.

Trouble from Within. Jews from other places came and discouraged the workers. The latter complained to Nehemiah that their strength was gone, and there was much rubbish in the way. There could not have been half so much rubbish as at the beginning, but things always seem worse when one is tired and discouraged. The workers even declared that they could build no more, but Nehemiah succeeded in heartening them, and they kept on. Some carried away the rubbish, others brought the stone, others laid one stone upon the other, and yet others guarded the workmen.

Further Efforts of the Enemies to Stop the Work. Finding that they could not make good their boast and themselves accomplish the destruction of the work, they tried to stop it by getting rid of the one great man back of it, Nehemiah the governor. After the breaches in the wall had been closed, but before the gates had been hung, Sanballat and Geshem sent messages to Nehemiah urging him to meet them in a village on the plain of Ono. Four times they sent, but each time Nehemiah answered: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you?"

The attempt to gain a chance to take Nehemiah's life having failed, they next tried what influence a threat of loss of reputation would have with him. Sanballat sent him an open letter, that all could read before it reached him, telling him of a report that he and the Jews were building the wall because they purposed rebelling and of his having appointed prophets to proclaim himself king, and threatening to make this known to the king of Persia unless he would arbitrate with them. They wished to make him afraid so that the work should not be completed, Nehemiah declared, and boldly he sent back word that no such things had been done, that they had invented everything. And then he turned to God for help: "Strengthen thou my hands," he implored.

As a last resort Tobiah and Sanballat sought to deprive Nehemiah of his influence by making him seem to his people a coward as well as a desecrater of the temple. They hired Shemaiah, a prophet in Jerusalem, to shut himself up in his house as though afraid of danger to his own life, and to urge Nehemiah to take refuge with him in the Temple, for the enemies were coming that night to slay him, Shemaiah declared. "Should such a man as I flee?" indignantly questioned Nehemiah. "Who is there, that, being such as I, would go into the Temple to save his life? I will not go in." And Nehemiah clearly saw that this message had not come from God but from his enemies.

The Work Completed. Despite all the efforts of the enemies and all the fears and weakness of the workers, the wall was brought to completion in the very short space of fifty-two days, B.C. 445-444. With great rejoicing a solemn dedication service was held.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"The Arabians" may refer to those dwelling in the desert south of Judah, but more probably they refer to the descendants of those whom Sargon established in Samaria after the exile of the people of the Northern Kingdom in 715 B.C. The Ammonites were the inhabitants of the country east of the Jordan between the Jabbok and the Arnon. The Ashdodites were the inhabitants of Ashdod, one of the chief cities of the Philistine plain, due west of Jerusalem near the sea. Jerusalem was surrounded by foes: on the north the half-heathen Samaritans, on the east the Ammonites, on the south—in possession even of Hebron—the Edomites and Arabians, and on the west the Philistines.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

One of our religious papers draws a number of lessons for pastors from Billy Sunday and his work. One of the lessons which is equally applicable to Sunday-school teachers, and can be drawn from Nehemiah and his works, is this: "Every teacher who expects to be an achieving leader, has to keep identified with the hustlers. Men of the world who hear Sunday usually make this comment first of all: 'Well, anyhow, that man is terribly in earnest.' It ought to be the determination of every teacher to win at least an equal encomium."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Humphrey Corners was not a very pleasant place in which to live, because it was not kept clean. One great eyesore of the place was a vacant lot, directly opposite the church, where old rubbish, bottles, tin cans, broken crockery, old shoes, etc., were thrown. But one day Lorna Conree had a real inspiration, and that very afternoon called a meeting of all the boys and girls, and the idea that she laid before them was so unusual that it "took" at once. The next morning every boy was at the dump almost before light. They wheeled soil from a vacant lot near by and threw it here and there on the refuse heap, and then they dug up the hard earth around the edges. The next morning it was the girls who slipped out of their beds before others in the families were awake. They brought seeds and threw them by handfuls over the pile and planted them in the earth that the boys had dug up. Then they waited. At first no one but the boys and girls noticed that the seeds were pushing their way through the earth, but at last the little plants began to climb over the pile and the secret was out: somebody had been planting nasturtiums.

The next Sunday the minister's text was "Over against his own house." "I think the children have set us older folk an example which we must follow," he said. "Like the people of Nehemiah's day all the children had a mind to work, and they covered the disagreeable and unpleasant things with beauty. We, too, must work in the dirt and work hard. Let us every one get right to work over against his own house and make this a clean town." And they did.

The minister's text (the account is condensed from a story by Bertha Burnham Bartlett in the "Sunday-School Times") was taken from the third chapter of Nehemiah, which gives details of the work on Jerusalem's walls that Nehemiah began soon after reaching the city. Who had made him governor there? How had he come to Jerusalem? What was the first thing he did after resting three days? Why?

For Older Pupils. Josephus wrote of our hero that "he was a man of good and righteous character, and very ambitious to make his own nation happy; and he hath left the walls of Jerusalem as an eternal monument of himself." To rebuild these walls had been the purpose of his coming to Jerusalem. How did he get the Jews to agree to the building? How did he organize them for the work?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

The Time to Come Out Strong. "Now, Mr. Tapley," said Mark (in Dickens' story), giving himself a tremendous blow in the chest by way of reviver, "just you attend to what I've got to say. Things is looking about as bad as they can look, young man. You'll not have such another opportunity for showing your jolly disposition, my fine fellow, as long as you live; and therefore, Tapley, now's your time to come out strong or never!"

Things were seemingly looking about as bad as they could look when the walls around Jerusalem had reached half their destined height. There was trouble within and without. The workers were discouraged, so weary and so faint-hearted that they declared they were not able to build any more of the wall. Their helpers, the Jews who had come from more distant places, received disheartening news from the men of their home towns, who came to them and kept saying over and over, "This work can't go on, it cannot; you must return with us and defend your own homes." And they knew that their enemies were planning a sudden attack and were confident of victory. Now was Nehemiah's time for coming out strong, and he did. He refused to be discouraged. He put heart into his people. "Be not ye afraid of them," he cried: "Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight." And by his own indomitable will Nehemiah triumphed; he won the victory over the discouraged workers, the discouraging friends, and the distressing foes, and soon he could report: "We returned all of us to the wall, every man unto his work." One resolute man had come out "strong" and had outgeneraled the multitude.

The "Tug-With-All-Your-Might Society." One of the names by which the Christian Endeavor Society is known in China is "The Tug-with-all-your-might Society." Certainly that title well describes the only method by which any Christian association can be a success. Life is one big tug-of-war, in which evil is all the while trying to get the best of us. In the moral as well as the physical sphere, to every action there must be a reaction, and every effort of the evil one should call forth a still mightier resisting effort on the part of the believer. The Chinese have the right of it—we must tug with all our might if we are to hold fast the faith, and, having done all, to stand.—Unknown.

Made of the Right Spirit. Miss Slattery once watched two little children who were busily engaged in building a house with a high wall around it on the sand by the seashore. The tide was coming in: suddenly a wave dashed over the wall, and they looked at each other in astonishment; then came another wave that completely destroyed house and wall and all. She expected the little folks would begin to cry, but no, they gazed long and silently at the ruin and then one little fellow said, "Come, let's build another one somewhere else," and the other one answered, "Let's."

The Lord is My Helper. If we but remembered the Lord, according to Nehemiah's injunction, how insignificant would appear the difficulties with which the path of Christian Service is beset. It is, however, part of the device of the Enemy so to confuse our minds as to obscure for the time the great facts of God's faithfulness. And he often succeeds. Hence we concentrate our thought upon problems and situations, instead of giving ourselves to prayer and betaking us to the sanctuary. For ready help is always available there. There our inspiration to build and to battle is certain of renewal. There in the fellowship of Christ we come to partake of something of his own heroism. "Remember the Lord" is the true motto of each one in the ranks of his Crusade.—"The Christian."

II. MERE SPECTATORS

They Put not Their Necks to the Work of the Lord. In the details given in the third chapter of the work of rebuilding the wall, we are told that the nobles of the Tekoites "put not their necks to the work of their Lord." The metaphor,

of course, is of the oxen yoked in pairs. One who has had experience with oxen says that there is a great deal of human nature about draught animals. He has often seen an ox looking as though it were having a hard time, wriggling and writhing, and all the while you could see daylight between the yoke and its neck.

"These nobles," writes J. A. Hutton, "were just like such oxen, and I am very sorry for them, because the work was accomplished without them. There is surely no man more to be pitied on God's earth than the man with a chance to do a big thing who does not do it. The walls were built without them, and days afterward, when they would be out taking a walk in the evening, some good man who had done his share in the building of the walls and had forgotten all about the little discussion of the time, would encounter one of these nobles and after the usual greetings would say, 'Are not these fine walls we have now?' And then he would say, 'O, I beg your pardon. You were rather opposed to these walls.' Some nights they would be out alone and a voice would say to them: 'These are fine walls. No doubt this is a far better city than it used to be. . . . The noble would say 'Silence!' but the voice would go on, because that voice which reminds one of something he ought to have done is God.

"There are no more unhappy men surely in the world than men who know that there is a bit of work which they could do for the glory of God and yet refuse the high call. Henry IV, of Navarre, returning from the battle of Arques and meeting one of his generals who had refused to go and fight with him and had sulked in his tent, greeted him in these words, 'Go and hang thyself. We fought at Arques and you were not there.'"

Others Who Came Not to the Work of Jehovah. Deborah was in an exalted, fiery, vindictive mood when she sang:

"Curse ye, Meroz, saith the angel of Jehovah,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,
Because they came not to the help of Jehovah,
To the help of Jehovah, against the mighty."

"Meroz stands for the shirker, for him who is willing to see other people fight the battles of life, while he simply comes in and takes the spoils," Phillips Brooks explains in "The Candle of the Lord." "There are many people always who are in the community and in the world what Meroz was in Palestine. For there is an everlasting struggle going on against wickedness and wretchedness. It never ceases. And the strange and sad thought which comes upon our minds sometimes is of how few people, after all, are really heartily engaged in that struggle, how few have cast themselves into it with all their hearts, how many there are who stand apart and wish it well but never expose themselves for it nor do anything to help it.

"Look at the manifest forms in which men show their will to work for God and goodness. Those of you who have had any occasion to observe it know full well by what a very small number of persons the charitable and missionary works of the church and all operations which require public spirit in a community are carried on. If there is a reform to be urged; if there is an abuse to be corrected in the administration of affairs; if there is some oppressed and degraded class whose rights, which they cannot assert themselves, must be asserted for them; if there is a palpable wrong done every day upon our streets—most of you know how very few are the people in this city, who, apart from any private interest in the matter, are looked to as likely to take any concern for the public good.

"There are in all our cities a great multitude of useless men, and of men perfectly contented in their uselessness. Many a man looks back upon his life, and save for the kindly offices which he has rendered to his immediate associates, he cannot remember one useful thing he ever did. He never stood up for a good cause. He never remonstrated against an evil. He never helped a bad man to be better. A merely useless man! His life might drop out of the host tomorrow and none would miss a soldier from the ranks. No onset or defense would be the weaker for his going. I know not how he reconciled it to himself."

It is a Crime to be a Mere Spectator in the Battle of Life. In the laws of Solon it was decreed that in the event of an insurrection breaking out in the streets of Athens, those should be put to death who merely looked on, taking no part in it, on one side or the other.

III ARMED WATCH FOR PEACE

The Patriot's Portion. The walls rose surely through opposition and intrigue; patriotism triumphed over spite; the work was finished, and Jerusalem stood again a city secure against her foes. It was a brave upbuilding, out of ruin, out of failure, through opposition and disgrace, scandal and disloyalty, acts of calumny, evil word and work. They bravely held to the task set before them, though while they labored half of them held the spears, from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. And lo! one day the star of victory, which crowns the lives of heroes, shone above their heads, and they thanked God for brave dreams realized and good work done.

It is, indeed, the truth that in every rising nation and every growing empire, trade and enterprise of the peaceful arts need to have with them the shelter of the spear-encircled flag, from the rising of the morning till the stars appear, and on through many a gray and golden dawn and night of cloud and stars.

There have been wide-eyed times when men have longed deeply for universal peace, and wished to see no more spear and sword, praying that the symbols of human war be done away. And yet every tittle of our liberty today has been won by brave men who were not afraid to fight—not an inch of it was won by whining, or we should still have been in serfdom and in chains. The spear and sword can be borne and bared in the most holy name of God. Although Christianity is the gospel of peace, it is not the gospel of cowardice; and, although a man be a Christian, there are duties which he owes to his own soul, his own nation and his fellowmen. It may fall to his lot to hold the spear for others' work, or work while others hold the spear. Yet, whatsoever be a man's lot he must patiently and bravely do his part if need be till the stars appear. Duty will not let you sleep. It calls you, it wakes you, it will not let you go. Whoever fears God fears to sit at ease as long as there is one wrong in the world to be righted, one truth crushed and trampled in the mire. True Christianity is the truest, manliest, great brave thing the world has ever seen; and it never feared nor needed to fear the drawing of the sword in a good cause, when nothing else could save righteousness from the bondage of the world.—Condensed from a Sermon by L. M. Watt.

Armed Watch for Peace in Switzerland Today. Switzerland has maintained her neutrality. Surrounded by nations at war, divided by internal dissensions, the Swiss are more determined than ever not to be drawn into the struggle for any reason but one—self-defense. The declaration of the New Helvetic Society, a vigorous Swiss national organization, is typical: "Our neutrality in this war is the assertion of our independence. It must not be passive, but active. We must be not only the country of refuge, but the country where, based on a respect of law, a higher conception of life, now so necessary to European civilization, can be realized. We are conscious of our obligations to maintain fairness in our judgments and charity in our actions toward the belligerents. We must come out of this cataclysm not weakened but strengthened. Switzerland must justify her existence, and must show how a small people may be a great nation."

Succoring with generous hospitality war sufferers of all countries, the Swiss are none the less alert against any violation of their frontiers. There is an atmosphere of war in Switzerland which sustains a certain nervous tension. The smallest village is familiar with the roll of tambours—but Swiss tambours. Dependent upon surrounding countries for her food supply, many observers were convinced that for her very existence Switzerland would be drawn into the war. Resistance has indeed been difficult. The State has been obliged to triple the national debt. Imports have fallen to half of what they were in 1915. Federal railway returns have dropped. For want of materials and coal many factories have been obliged to shut down. Hotels are deserted. Mobilization has been another serious handicap. Indeed, Switzerland seems to have suffered all the hardships of war but one, the greatest—loss of life.—Sanford Griffith, in "The Outlook."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 3. He who has swerved from a course he knows is right, through fear of ridicule, taunts, sneers or sarcasm of those around him, is not a man self-

directed by right; he is only a weak puppet pulled by the strings of manipulation in the hands of others.—Wm. George Jordan.

Verse 9. The true way to meet opposition is two-fold—prayer and prudent watchfulness.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 10. We may not be responsible for discouragements suggesting themselves, but we are responsible for letting them become dissuasive.—Alexander Maclaren.

Verse 14. The highest forms of courage are being perpetually illustrated by the soldiers of Christ.—W. L. Watkinson.

Verse 14.

O friends, be men; so act that none may feel
Ashamed to meet the eyes of other men.—Homer's "Iliad."

Verse 15. It is curious to see how the space clears around a man of decisive spirit and leaves him room and freedom.—John Foster.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

When a crisis is upon one there is not time to debate considering one's main course of action. Crises will come: how shall we meet them? Shall we meet them with prayer alone, and then idly await the result? Shall we meet them with earnest effort alone, and expect to come off victor? Or shall we now resolve both to pray and watch, to cry to God for help and also to exercise all the foresight and powers that we possess?

Nehemiah conducted his work of fortifying the city as a work of God. The hand of God was upon him and prospered him, he said. You, too, may recognize God in your daily occupations and do your work as for him. What can you do well? "God has given to me as to Nehemiah the power to plan, to organize men for work, to direct them and to bring their work to a finish." You, too, are doing a great work. What is your calling? "God has given me skill in caring for the home." That, too, is a Divine calling, a great work.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Qualities of a great leader.
2. Armed watch for peace. See the Third Topic and current magazines.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the account of the dedication of the walls. (Neh. 12.27-43.) 2. What did Nehemiah do about the people of Jerusalem and its government? (Neh. 7.1-4; 11.1-2.) 3. What was Nehemiah's position at Jerusalem? 4. What was Ezra's? 5. What was the "Book of the Law of Moses"? 6. For what was "eat the fat and drink the sweet" a proverbial expression? (Guide, p. 435.) 7. What facts in regard to the right kind of preaching or teaching does the lesson give? 8. What facts in regard to the right kind of hearing? 9. What great issues originated in the century that ended with Nehemiah? (Guide, p. 437.) 10. Read the Psalm from which our Golden Text is taken, entitled "Meditations and Prayers relating to the Law of God," and see how many verses you can find in which the Law is not mentioned in some way.

Questions to Think About. 1. Why have we not heard about Ezra during the building of the walls? (Guide, p. 428.) 2. Why was the assembly in "the broad place"? 3. What was the appearance of the Book? 4. Why was it necessary for the readers to "give the sense"? 5. What is the meaning of "the joy of Jehovah is your strength"? 6. Why was this reading of the law very important? (Guide, p. 436.) 7. Were children present at the reading of the Law? 8. How did the people show their reverence? 9. Why did the people weep when they heard the Law read? 10. Why did Nehemiah and Ezra stop their mourning? 11. Is it a Christian duty to be happy? 12. Is Bible study needed as much today as in Nehemiah's time? 13. When do you read your Bible?

Note-Book Work. Write "XIX: Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem."

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH TEACH THE LAW

Golden Text

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119.105

LESSON Nehemiah 8: verses 1-4a, 5, 6, 8-12 printed MEMORIZE verses 2, 3

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel. 2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. 4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose. 5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 And Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly: and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. 10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength. 11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. 12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Reading of the Law, 1-8.
- II. The Comforting of the People, 9-12.

1. *The broad place.* The streets of Jerusalem have always been very narrow, most of them more like an alley than a street. The only spot where a large gathering could take place would be a "broad place" or open square, or else beyond the city walls.—*That was before the water gate.* The water gate was the gate through which the water-carriers from Gihon or the Virgin's Spring entered the city: the space before it was, therefore, "between the southeastern precincts of the Temple and the eastern wall."—*Ezra the scribe.* See Ezra 7.6, 11.—*The book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.* Exactly what this refers to is a disputed question among scholars. The entire Pentateuch, some believe; the legislative portions only of the Pentateuch, others maintain. It is interesting to recall that in the Apocryphal Book of Esdras the statement is made that Ezra and five companions re-wrote the Law.

2. *Ezra the priest brought the law.* "Ezra never appeared as a Solon legislating for his people. Still neither is he a Justinian codifying a system of legislation already recognized and adopted. He stands between the two, as the introducer of a law hitherto unpracticed" (Adeney).—*Upon the first day of the seventh month.* The seventh month, Tishri, is "the sacred month" of the Jews

in which were celebrated the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Since the time of Alexander the Great it has been kept by Jews as their New Year's Day.—*And all that could hear with understanding.* The children who were capable of understanding the reading.

3. *From early morning.* Heb. *from the light*, RVm. During these six hours reading and instruction evidently alternated, verse 8.

4. *A pulpit.* Heb. *tower*, RVm.—*Which they had made for the purpose.* "Beneath the fresh fortification, probably, which would act as a sounding-board for the reader, large enough to hold Ezra and thirteen supporters" (MacLaren).

5. *Opened the book.* Unrolled the roll. See p. 305.) *Above all the people.* On his pulpit or platform.—*All the people stood up.* In the synagogue services of Christ's day the people stood during the reading of the Law. Here, however, it is not necessary to suppose that the people stood the entire time (from dawn till noon), that the Law was being read, but only that they stood while Ezra offered his prayer, verse 6.

6. *Blessed Jehovah.* "In the modern synagogue prayers are offered when the Law is taken from its keeping place and when it is returned" (Davies).—*Amen.* So be it.—*With the lifting up of the hands.* Evidently with the palms upward in supplication for the Divine blessing.—*With their faces to the ground.* "We should learn the lesson taught by that waiting crowd prone on their faces and blessing God for his word. Such attitude must ever precede reading it, if we are to read aright" (MacLaren).

8. *They read in the book.* In verse 3 we are told that Ezra read. Evidently Ezra began the reading, possibly did all the reading, and the Levites mentioned in the seventh verse repeated and explained the words to separate groups of people.—*Distinctly.* Or, *with an interpretation*, RVm.—*So that they understood.* Or, *and caused them to understand*, RVm. This may mean either that the classical Hebrew was so different from the common Aramaic dialect then used (see *Light from Oriental Life*), that it needed interpretation, or, more probably, that explanations and comments were given so as to make the law clear to everyone.

9. *This day is holy.* Because it was new moon, and the day of the blowing of trumpets (Lev. 23.24), and also because of the reading of the law.—*For the people wept.* Recall the effect on Josiah of the reading of the Law, Lesson VIII, Third Quarter, and the reason there given in the nineteenth verse. The people had evidently not known the requirements of the Law, and now they saw their guilt. "The priestly circles would be in possession of traditions, usages, and even written documents, but such knowledge was clearly not the property of the people" (McPadyen).

10. *He.* Either Nehemiah or Ezra.—*Eat the fat and drink the sweet.* This was a proverbial expression for "Do not fast nor mourn."—*Send portions.* See Dt. 26.11-13; Esth. 9.19.—*Neither be ye grieved.* After penitence and pardon should come rejoicing.—*The joy of Jehovah.* Your joy in Jehovah.—*Strength.* Stronghold, RVm.

11. *Hold your peace, for the day is holy.* It was an ill-omen to use words or signs of lamentation on a feast day, Hab. 2.20.



A Book of the Law

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

8. *And they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.* For a century and a half the national life of Judah had been suppressed. The cream of the nation had been deported into Assyria and Persia, many thousands had fled and escaped into Egypt, while the lowest and poorest, who had been suffered to remain, had been intermingled with Syrians, Samaritans, and other neighboring races. For nearly five generations they had been mingled with the

heathen and had learned their language. Hebrew had become to them by this time almost a strange tongue. We know how the Alexandrian Jews united to supply the Greek version of the Scriptures, the Septuagint, for their countrymen, to whom Greek had become their mother-tongue. In the East, by the Tigris and the Euphrates, the change was even more rapid, and the cognate dialect of Chaldee (in which language part of Ezra, Daniel, and other post-exilic inspired books are written) became within two generations the colloquial medium of the exiles. Another cognate tongue, the Syrian, or Aramaic, had supplemented Hebrew in the Holy Land itself; and the language of Moses was little less strange to the Chaldee-speaking exile of the return, or to the peasant of Judea, than Latin was to the Italian five hundred years ago—not utterly unintelligible, but rendering it needful to give the sense.—H. B. Tristram, in "Bible Manners and Customs."

10. *Send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared.* This has generally been interpreted to mean that the wants of the poor were to be supplied; but Harmer prefers to refer it to the custom of sending a portion of a feast to those who cannot well come to it, especially to the relatives of those who give the feast, and to those in a state of mourning, who in their grief would make no preparation. In Nehemiah it may mean a mutual exchange of the good things provided for the feast.—James M. Freeman, in "Bible Manners."

Charity is obligatory by the law of Mohammed. The Koran bids a tenth to be given to the poor, but this may be considered as unknown. At assemblies, feasts, and marriages, the poor, or rather the mendicants, receive either food or coppers, and they seem to be proud of the *role* they have to take in order to allow others to fulfil the law. The beggars generally lean on a long stick—for they must feign some infirmity—and carry a tin or wooden bowl dangling on their arm—their trade-mark as it were—and they assemble at the doors of mosques or churches, where they receive a few coppers. The Jerusalem corporation of mendicants is certainly well supplied with cripples, blind, and feigning beggars, for they have here every opportunity for asking alms of the pilgrims of all nations who meet here, and liberally give to the miserable-looking people.—Phillip Baldensperger, in "Palestine Exploration Fund Statement."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When the Book of the Law was found in the Temple in Josiah's day, what effect did the reading have upon him? Why? What was the shape of the Book? What were its contents? What other religious revivals have we studied?

The Walls Dedicated. There was great rejoicing when the wall about Jerusalem was finished. At the imposing dedication there was a procession of two great companies, one of them headed by Ezra and the other by Nehemiah. During the fortifying of Jerusalem we have heard nothing of Ezra, and yet according to Ezra 7.9 he had gone to Jerusalem thirteen years earlier than Nehemiah. See page 428.

The City Organized. Nehemiah's chief concern after the fortifications of Jerusalem were restored was to organize the government of the city by appointing over it Hanani, his brother, and Hananiah the governor of the castle, to give it a large population by bringing into it many who were living without (7.1-4; 11.1-2), and to register the people, comparing the first list of those who had returned with the people actually in the city.

The Reading of the Law. Now that the city walls were rebuilt it was time to turn to the rebuilding of the people's lives. Chapters 8-10 tell of the adoption of the Law, the inauguration of that Judaism which we see in full force in New Testament times when religion was reduced to the keeping of rules and regulations. Now Ezra the priest and the scribe becomes the chief figure in the history.

The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes; the Law was read on the first day of the seventh month, but the year is not given. The place where the great assembly met was the broad place before the water gate in the wall of Jerusalem.

The building of synagogues which we hear of in New Testament times where the Law could be read was a natural outcome of such assemblies. "For the Jews in all ages, and for the world at large, the great event of this period is the adoption of the Law by the citizens of Jerusalem. We have come to the

watershed of Hebrew history. Up to this part all the better teachers had been toiling painfully in their almost hopeless efforts to induce the Jews to accept the unique faith of Jehovah, with its lofty claims and its rigorous restraints. That faith itself, however, had appeared in three forms,—as a popular cult, often degraded to the level of the local religion of heathen neighbors; as a priestly tradition, exact and minute in its performances, but the secret of a caste; and as a subject of prophetic instruction, instinct with moral principles of righteousness and spiritual conceptions of God, but too large and free to be reached by a people of narrow views and low attainments. With the publication of the Law of Ezra the threefold condition ceased, and henceforth there was but one type of religion for the Jews."

A Time When Great Issues Originated. "Within the century which ended with the age of Nehemiah the teaching of Moses was established as the basis of the national life, and the first steps were taken toward the formation of a canon of Scripture. Jewish society was molded into a shape which succeeding centuries modified, but did not essentially change. During this period, the Judea of the days of our Lord came into being. Within this period the forces which opposed Christ and the forces which rallied to his side had their origin. This century saw the rise of parties, which afterwards became sects, under the names of Pharisees and Sadducees. It laid the foundations of Rabbinism. It fixed the attitude of the Jews toward the Gentiles. It put the priesthood on the way to supreme authority. It gave birth to the Samaritan schism.

"Nehemiah's Library." If we may trust the first tradition on the subject which can be traced, it was Nehemiah who first undertook to form a Library of the books of the past times: namely, of "the Books of the Kings, and Prophets, those which bore the name of David, and the Royal Letters concerning sacred offerings." It is evident from the terms of the description that "Nehemiah's Library" was not coextensive with any existing canon. It was not a formation of Divine oracles so much as a repository of whatever materials from whatever sources might be useful for the future history of his people. It was not the complete canon of the Old Testament which was then formed, for some even of the earlier books, such as Ezekiel, had not yet fully established their right; and many books or parts of books now contained in it were still absent. Nor was it based on the modern idea of a strictly sacred volume, for one of its chief component parts consisted of the official letters of the Persian kings, which have never had a place in the ecclesiastical roll of the consecrated Scriptures. It was the natural and laudable attempt to rescue from oblivion such portions of the Hebrew literature as, with perpetually increasing additions, might illustrate and enforce the one central book of the Pentateuch, round which they were gathered.—Dean Stanley, in "History of the Jewish Church."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The right kind of Bible teaching is here shown in a nutshell. It was for all, men, women and children. They were no doubt in "graded" groups, each under the leadership of one of the Levites, verse 7. It was a model school, for they were not only willing but eager—the request for the reading came from them to Ezra. The classes were interested, attentive (verse 3), reverent (verses 5, 6), responsive (verse 6). The Scripture was explained so that every one understood its meaning. So clearly was it expounded, and so impressively was it taught, that its truth touched their consciences, made them see how far short they had come of fulfilling its commands. The effects of the teaching did not stop with penitence, for knowledge led to worship and service. A mighty work was accomplished by the right teaching of the Pentateuch, five Books of the Bible, in whole or in part. We have sixty-six Books, and among them the priceless Gospels.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In a home in England last year three soldiers were quartered, and the seven-year-old daughter took the money which she had been saving, and bought three copies of John's Gospels, one for each soldier. Then she thought of the twenty-five dollars which her father had put in the bank for her on her seventh birthday. "Mother, how many soldiers are there in this town?" she asked. "Thousands, my dear," the mother replied wonderingly.

"Mother, how many Gospels of St. John would twenty-five dollars buy?" the child questioned. "I would like to give all the soldiers one."

In the time of Nehemiah the Gospel of John had not been written, nor had Jesus lived his wonderful life on earth. But there was a part of our Old Testament Scriptures which was called the Book of the Law, and Ezra was as eager to bring this to the knowledge of the people as that little girl was to bring the knowledge of Christ to those soldiers. Who was Ezra?

For Older Pupils. For many years a "Bible Sunday" has been celebrated here and there in all Christian lands and in Christian churches in many heathen countries. A common date is needed to make of this a Universal Bible Sunday. Many have advocated the third Sunday before Christmas, which this year is today. Our lesson is admirably chosen for the Universal Bible Sunday, whether or not with intent on the part of our Lesson Committee. The reason given for the universal observance of a Bible Sunday is that the truth of the Scriptures may be attested and their authority upheld more faithfully, and that there may be a deeper study and a wider acceptance of their teaching in all lands and among all peoples. Every Sunday is Bible Sunday, but in a special way our lesson honors the Word of God.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I SO THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THE READING

A Model Bible Reading. This Bible reading reminds us of scenes which used to take place in days before the wide distribution of Bibles placed a copy in every man's hand. At St. Paul's readers used to read aloud to the assembled groups of people, who gathered around the lectern to which the old black-letter Bibles were chained. It must have been an impressive spectacle to see the Bible read under such circumstances, whether in Jerusalem or London.

The prime requisites in reading the Bible are (1) the uplifted heart to the great Teacher; (2) the willingness to obey its injunctions and commands, because he who willeth to do God's will shall know of the doctrine; (3) the careful comparison of Scripture with Scripture. There is no more fruitful manner of Bible study than to follow one subject each day through various parts of the Bible, with the use of references, until every part is illumined by illustrative sidelights. The Book should have, at least, twenty minutes each day.—F. B. Meyer.

How to Gain the Best Understanding of the Word. Luther says that he studied the Bible as he gathered apples; first he shook the whole tree, then climbed the tree and shook each limb, and then each branch, and every twig, and looked under each leaf. Let us search the Bible as a whole; shake the whole tree, read it rapidly; then shake every limb, studying book after book; then every branch, giving attention to chapters, when they do not break the sense; then every twig by careful study of the paragraphs and sentences. You will also be rewarded if you will look under every leaf and search the meaning of its words.—A. C. Dixon.

How the Word Has Been Read through the Centuries. If we can judge correctly of the character of the preaching of the apostolic times by what is recorded of Stephen, Philip, Apollos and the apostles themselves, it consisted chiefly in showing that all the Gospel facts were the fulfilment of the Divine plan as predicted, warranted and explained in the Holy Scriptures. These preachers did, each in his own way, exactly what Jesus himself did in his conversation-sermon on the way to Emmaus, when, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," and showed the disciples who were troubled "by the things that had come to pass in these days" that these were the very things they would have anticipated if they had only read aright their own Scriptures, which unrolled before their eyes the whole plan of God's redeeming love, including the incarnation, the sufferings and death of Christ and the glory which was to follow.

During the period immediately following the apostles and extending to Gregory, known as the Patristic period, the sermon consisted chiefly of running comments on the Scriptures, the style varying according to the temperament and local requirements of the preachers. Origen was expository; Augustine theological; Chrysostom oratorical; Gregory metaphysical; many of them

given to allegorical interpretation, but all aiming to unfold the contents of the Bible. It was during that period of Biblical preaching, and largely because of it that the Church became master of the Roman world.

From that time to the Reformation the character of the preaching was powerfully affected by the rapid growth of ecclesiastical imperialism. The mediaeval period produced some of the most powerful preachers of Christendom; but the sermons took on many other elements than those that characterized those of the Patristic age. Bible exegesis ceased to be the dominant feature, and practically all were filled with the spirit of the rapidly growing churchism. Preachers preached the supreme authority of the Church rather than that of the Bible. We meet with many mighty spirits in the pulpit of these centuries. Scholasticism was represented in Aquinas, pietism in Bonaventura; mysticism in Tauler; a sweet combination of theology and rhapsody in Bernard. But we sadly miss the "joyful sound" by the music of which God's people were able "to walk in the light of his countenance." The Bible was no longer the supreme feature of the pulpit utterance. Corresponding with its neglect was the decline of the spiritual life of the Church. "The dark ages" ensued.

In the depressing moral condition of the mediaeval period many devout and scholarly men sought relief in a return to the study of the Bible, and thus prepared the way for the Reformation. The sermons of the reformers were characterized by the strong emphasis they placed upon the exegesis of the sacred book. The Word of God again sounded in the darkness, and the miracle of creation was repeated. "It was light." The Bible was the soul of the Reformation. Unfortunately controversy soon became a common feature of Protestant preaching and the pulpit often became the arena of gladiatorial combats. But in it all the final appeal was to the Bible. And on that foundation Protestantism stands.

The modern period of preaching cannot be easily characterized. It exhibits widely divergent types of sermons both in substance and purpose. But in looking over the entire history of modern preaching two things appear.

First, every great spiritual awakening in the Church may be traced directly as effect and cause to deeper understanding of the holy Book. Those religious movements directed by Luther, Wesley, Edwards, Finney, Moody and Sunday are conspicuous examples. The same is true of local revivals which do not command wide attention. They have been started and sustained by preaching the Bible.

Second, churches in which the Bible is persistently preached are invariably centers of moral and spiritual strength. They do not always command popular applause, but they are sure to cultivate a high ideal of personal character and to conserve the best interests of the community.

Through the Scriptures flow the streams of living waters which have refreshed and enriched the ages. The preacher who turns aside from them to modern novelties only dips his cup in stagnant pools. I am sure that Professor Fosdick was right when he recently said: "Could increasing numbers of our men go out from this school into the churches clearly seeing, thoroughly believing, deeply experiencing the truths of the Scriptures and on fire to preach them, we could here become such a center of an access of spiritual power as would mean a new era in America's religious history."—Condensed from an article in "The Christian Advocate," by Dr. A. H. Tuttle.

II GOD'S SERVICE MEANS JOY, NOT SORROW

Grandma Pettit's Application of Nehemiah's Words, "Drink the Sweet."
"Trouble is with Maria," said Grandma Pettit, "that she goes against Scripture and breaks one of the commandments."

"O Grandma, Maria doesn't steal or lie or murder, surely," exclaimed a shocked listener.

"I didn't say she did," was the decisive answer. "There are more than ten commandments. I was thinking of one my mother used to quote, one by the mouth of Nehemiah, not Moses. She used to say that those who did not have a good time in this world, disobeyed the commandment, 'Drink the sweet!' There is something sweet at one time or another for everybody, and there's no need to go drinking a bitter cup the whole time. Sometimes the Lord does put it to the lips, and then people must 'take it with both hands and drink it';

they'll find comfort at the bottom of the cup. But to go exploring round as Maria does for all sorts of worriments, and testing of every cup that looks a mite bitter, is what I don't believe in. 'Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet,' is what Nehemiah says, and after he had tasted plenty of bitter, too."

"But there does seem to be a great deal of bitter, after all," sighed one.

"Some folks hunt it up and drink it themselves when there's no need," said grandma significantly.

"Poison not thy wine with bitter herbs when God hath made it sweet," quoted a hitherto silent listener.

Grandma Pettit looked up approvingly: "No, don't," she said.—"The Wellspring."

Christians Should be "Skylark Christians." "Our preacher is a skylark Christian," boasted one of his people. Fine bird! It sings morning, noon, and evening; sings as it springs from the flowery sod, also when the ground is white with snow. What a song, too! a shower of melody, and infinite sweetness with no undertone of pain. So is it ever with the Christian who lives in the power and confidence of his faith.

Some Christians, however, are of a very different feather. They have not so much music as the sparrow on the housetop; they chatter like the crane or swallow, or mourn sore like the dove. If we would only realize the full truth and blessedness of our faith, we should continually go up and come down singing, until one fine day we should go up singing, up, up, beyond the blue, beyond the sun, and come down no more, lost in the eternal light.—W. L. Watkinson.

III SEND PORTIONS UNTO HIM FOR WHOM NOTHING IS PREPARED

Be a Joy-Bringer. The best way to create joy in our own hearts is to set ourselves to create it in others. It is not enough to eat the fat and drink the sweet in our own selfish little corner; we must send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. In every circle there are many who look across a desolate world, which has no reassuring smile, no greeting voice, no loving or loyal heart. Look out for these. They hide for the most part like wounded game in the thicket. Go forth to be a joy-bringer to such as sit in darkness and the shadow of death.—F. B. Meyer.

Be Generous Generously. If you are going to do a good thing, do it properly. Sit down and consider the cost if you must, but when you have decided to do the right thing, do it finely, nobly, greatly. Have you decided to give? Then give graciously, spontaneously, with an open-handed, whole-hearted kindness which doubles all the value of your giving. Consider: Why are you helping this man at all? Why, to help him! Out of the goodness of your heart and out of a wish to be of service to him. Then how foolish to do it in such a way as to spoil his happiness in receiving! How foolish to defeat your own object by a way of doing things which brings you no gain and involves him in loss! There are men who have tried to do us a kindness, and they have set about it in such a fashion that we have not forgiven them yet. Give or do not give; one or the other. But if you are to be generous, be generous generously, and get all the credit, all the benefit, all the happiness, and all the influence for good out of it.—Dr. C. F. Aked, in "Old Events and Modern Meanings."

The True Christmas Spirit. In your preparations for Christmas, don't fail to send something to those for whom nothing is prepared. He who has the true spirit of Christmas will not be content with making happy only those whom he loves.

Recall Dickens' "Christmas Carol" with its picture of Scrooge, that rich, hard-hearted, tight-fisted, morose old man, whom nobody wanted to see, whom no beggar ventured to ask for a gift. He never thought of doing any good to anyone; he lived only for himself. But he was visited by three ghosts—the ghost of the past, the ghost of the present, and the ghost of the future, and they taught him a lesson. He changed his ways, became a good master, a good friend, opened his heart and his purse, and then he began to find a joy in living whereas once he had hated life, and all because he learned to send portions to those for whom nothing was prepared.

Among the Poor in London. Sister Hettie, who is the leader of the

woman's work in connection with one of the poorest of London's Missions, has pathetic stories of how the poor help one another. She has told of a poor woman pawning her dress in order to provide nourishment for another woman in the same house who was ill; and of a dying man refusing to drink a glass of milk, because a little boy on the floor below had had nothing to eat that day. "Give it to the boy," he said, and they moistened his lips with water as his life slowly ebbed away. "Wasn't it beautiful of him?" said Sister Hettie. "This is the kind of thing that makes the task of helping the poor so sacred to us."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. He who does not intend to obey does not wish to know the Law.—Alexander MacLaren.

Verse 9. 'Tis impious in a good man to be sad.—Edward Young.

Verse 10. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.—Paul.

Verse 10. Let your heart feel for the afflictions and distresses of everyone, and let your hand give in proportion to your purse.—George Washington.

Verse 12. The doers of deeds are always hopeful and cheerful.—Rufus M. Jones.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

When I look at my life in the light of God's law I may justly weep. If I look at the life I have lived through the year, I may justly put on sackcloth. What little use I have made of it! How I have fainted under its sorrows! How I have neglected to draw sweetness and profit from its thousand gifts and opportunities! We cannot look at the past without tears, hot tears of regret and penitence. Yet it is my joy to look at my life in the light of God's love. He speaks to me words of cheer and hope. If in the stern days of the Mosaic economy the people were dismissed to feasting and gladness, how much more shall we trust and rejoice who taste the fulness of God's love and mercy in Jesus Christ!—W. L. Watkinson.

Our Prayer. "I thank thee, dear Lord, for thy Word. It is my guide and my stay and my delight. Help me to use it constantly as a message from thee. May it speak to my soul and make me strong to live. And let me never doubt its power to lead and instruct and bless. Amen."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Security of national life depends upon knowledge of and obedience to the Bible. See "The Supremacy of the Bible," "Biblical World," March, 1916.
2. Bible exegesis. See Dr. Tuttle's article, page 438.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Where had Nehemiah been since our last lesson? 2. What is meant by "treading winepresses"? (*Guide*, p. 443.) 3. When did the Sabbath begin? 4. How far was it from Tyre to Jerusalem? 5. What protests against profaning the Sabbath are made in Ezek. 20.12, 20; 44.24; Isa. 56.4, 6; 58.13? 6. Which commandment is in regard to the keeping of the Sabbath? Where is it found? What does it say? 7. Read what is said about Sabbath observance in Ex. 20.8-11; Isa. 58.13, 14; Mt. 12.1-8; Mk. 2.13-3.6; Lk. 4.16.

Questions to Think About. 1. What are some of the things which you must get on Sunday? 2. Why are drug stores open on Sunday? 3. Is it necessary for anyone to buy soda water or candy or cigars at a drug store on Sunday? 4. Are Sunday newspapers a necessity? 5. What do the Sunday papers contain which make them a necessity for you? 6. Are football games a necessity on Sunday? 7. What people are obliged to work on Sunday? 8. Is it wrong for them to work? 9. What did Jesus say in regard to the keeping of the Sabbath? 10. How can Sunday be made a delight to children? 11. What can you do to make the day of mental and spiritual uplift for yourself? 12. What can you do to make the day a happier one for others?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Richard Watson Gilder's poem on page 448. Write "XX: Teaching the Law."

NEHEMIAH ENFORCES THE LAW OF THE SABBATH

Golden Text

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exodus 20.8

LESSON Nehemiah 12.15-22 MEMORIZE verses 17, 18

15 In those days saw I in Judah some men treading winepresses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses *therewith*, as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they sold victuals. 16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, who brought in fish, and all manner of wares, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day; 18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

19 And it came to pass that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut, and commanded that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I over the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. 20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of wares lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. 21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. 22 And I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember unto me, O my God, this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy loving-kindness.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED THE LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. The Sabbath Profaned.
 1. By labor, 15.
 2. By trading, 16.
- II. Practical Measures for Reform, 17-22a.
- III. Nehemiah's Prayer, 22b.

15. *In those days saw I.* Nehemiah reports what he saw after his return: See the Historical Background.—*In Judah.* In the country round about Jerusalem.—*Treading winepresses.* See Light from Oriental Life.—*Sheaves.* Or, *heaps of grain*, RVm. If sheaves is meant, it was straw; if grain, it was being brought for threshing.—*I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.* The food was brought into the city on the Sabbath, and when it was sold on the following day Nehemiah made his protest. "Next to circumcision, Sabbath-keeping was the principal mark of the Jew. In the days of our Lord it was the most highly prized feature of the ancient faith. This was then so obvious that it was laid hold of by the Roman satirists, who knew little about the strange traders in the *Ghetto* except that they 'sabbatised.' Nehemiah saw that if the sacred day of rest were to be abandoned, one of his bulwarks of separation would be lost" (Adeney).

16. *Men of Tyre.* Gentiles.—*Therein.* In the city.—*Fish.* It was probably salted and dried, for Tyre was far from Jerusalem: see Neh. 3.3.—*All manner of wares.* All sorts of things for sale.—*And in Jerusalem.* "In the Sacred City!" is seemingly Nehemiah's exclamation.

17. *There I contended with the nobles of Judah.* As he had with the rulers, verse 11.

18. *Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us?* Recall Jeremiah's warning to their fathers, Jer. 17.22, 23, 27. Their present

evil was their loss of national independence, being subject to Persian rule. "Nehemiah seems to trace all national calamities to the breach of the Sabbath; but, of course, he is simply laying stress on the sin about which he is speaking, as any man who sets himself earnestly to work to fight any form of evil is apt to do. Then the men who are not in earnest cry out about 'exaggeration.' Many other sins besides Sabbath-breaking had a share in sending Israel into captivity; and if Nehemiah had been fighting with idolatrous tendencies he would have isolated idolatry as the cause of its calamities" (Maclaren).

19. *Began to be dark before the Sabbath.* The Sabbath began at dark on the day preceding.—*My servants.* His own attendants.—*Over the gates.* To keep watch there and prevent the bringing in the merchandise on the Sabbath.

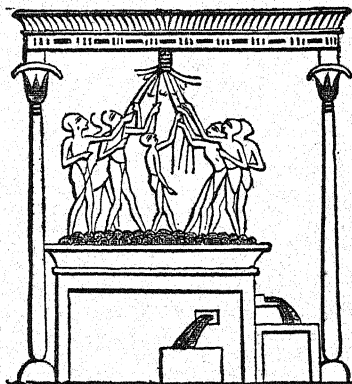
20. *Lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.* Since they could not sell within the city limits, they evaded Nehemiah's ruling by camping outside the walls and setting up their wares there; and the people came out from the city to purchase them on the Sabbath.

22. *I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves.* "The duty was a sacred one, since upon it depended the nation's fidelity to the Sabbath."—*That they should come and keep the gates.* Either they supplemented the work of Nehemiah's own servants, or the latter were then withdrawn from the watch.—*Remember unto me, O my God, this also.* See Nehemiah's earlier prayer in which he had pleaded the merits of his good deeds, verse 14. He is seemingly self-righteous, but he is animated by the belief that one is rewarded according to his works.—*And spare me according to the greatness of thy lovingkindness.* He is also humble and conscious of his need of mercy and forgiveness.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

17. *What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?* By the time of the Maccabees the Jews kept the Sabbath so strictly that they preferred to be massacred rather than defend themselves on that day, 1 Mac. 2.32-38. Today on the Sabbath a Hebrew in Palestine, so a native declares, would sooner have his hand cut off than receive money, open a business letter, or transact any business, or even light a lamp or a fire, make a bed, or warm his food.

15. *Treading winepresses.* The winepress consists of two troughs cut in the solid rock, with a partition about three inches thick left between them. One is higher than the other, and this upper one is a large flat square, about a foot or a foot and a half deep. Here the grapes are thrown in and trodden by the feet of men, women and children—usually of the same family, or relatives having a joint interest in the vineyard. As they tread they keep time with hand-clapping and snatches of song. After being thus pressed by the feet, the grape skins are collected into a heap, a large flat stone is laid upon them, and they are subjected to pressure from a large weighted beam. The juice flows into the lower trough through the opening in the partition. It is smaller but deeper. If the position of the rock allows it, a hole near the bottom lets off the juice into vessels for collecting it.—G. M. Mackie, in "Bible Manners and Customs."



An Egyptian Representation of Treading Grapes

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What miracle of healing did Jesus perform on the Sabbath to which the Jews objected? Why did they object? What did Jesus hold regarding the doing of deeds of mercy on the Sabbath? What did he once do to traders who were selling their wares on the Sabbath? When Nehemiah gained Artaxerxes' permission to go to Jerusalem, did he agree to return?

Backsliding in Judea. When Nehemiah left his position at the Persian court Artaxerxes had granted him only a leave of absence, and after twelve years of

service at Jerusalem he returned to Persia. As Ezra is not mentioned, we may suppose that he returned to Babylon. Left without a strong leader, the people of Judea backslid, and much that their powerful reformers had wrought was undone. It is natural to suppose that rumors of the relapse reached Nehemiah; at any rate, he obtained a second leave of absence and went back to Jerusalem. Four great evils he found. Tobiah, the arch enemy, had been allowed to dwell within the very Temple precincts; the payment of the Levites had been neglected; mixed marriages were again allowed; and the Sabbath was profaned. The measures which he took against the Sabbath desecration are given in our lesson text.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Tyre was a Phoenician city on the coast directly west of Dan, often mentioned as the northern limit of Palestine. It was eighty-five miles from Joppa, and over thirty miles from that seaport to Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Questions as to the right or wrong of doing specific things on Sunday are put to every Sunday-school teacher, sometimes to his embarrassment. If he is wise, he will remember that Jesus gave principles, not rules, and will recall his custom of attending the synagogue and of doing good on the Sabbath day.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Elephants over in Rangoon are trained to pick up with their tusks the huge teak logs, which are tremendously heavy, and pile them up for shipment. Several years ago an English firm bought a herd of young elephants and trained them for this work. Six days in the week they work faithfully, but always on the seventh men and animals rested. Then one Saturday the river rose rapidly, and on Sunday the firm saw that their logs piled up on the bank would be swept out to sea if they were not moved. The drivers were ordered to bring out the elephants. This they tried to do, but not an elephant would move. It was Sunday, and they did not work on Sunday. Coaxing being of no use, the drivers dug their goads into the animals, "whereupon, as if by preconcerted signal, each elephant swung his trunk, seized his driver about the waist, and put him gently but firmly on the ground, as much as to say, 'You mustn't do that, you know! We'll work faithfully on week-days, but we won't work on Sunday.'" When the head driver, in his desperation, seized the ear of his elephant with a hook, the animal picked him up in his trunk and flung him against the side of the corral. That settled the matter, and the elephants had their Sunday rest. Twice after that the elephants were tested on Sunday, but they kept an accurate account of work days and could not be deceived—they would not work.

There were many animals forced to work on the Sabbath in the time of Nehemiah. What were they compelled to do? What other work was carried on by the men? What did Nehemiah say about it?

For Older Pupils. "Every Friday evening," say the ancient Jewish rabbis, "two angels, the dark accuser and the bright defender, are watching the Jewish household to see whether it is prepared for the reception of the Sabbath bride. If they meet the unmistakable signs of the holiday cheer and peace, then the bright angel exclaims: 'May peace and happiness for ever find their home here!' and the dark, accusing angel is compelled to say 'Amen.' But when a man neglects the Sabbath, and the household enjoys no periods of calm and religious repose, the accusing angel says, 'Cursed be he who neglects the Sabbath and the loving interests of the household,' and the good angel is obliged to respond, 'Amen!' though with tears." In this poetic account the accusing angel well voices the feeling of Nehemiah when, on his return to Jerusalem, he found the Sabbath desecrated.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I PROFANING THE SABBATH DAY

Thou Shalt not Do Any Work on the Sabbath Day. It is many centuries since Moses came down from the mount with his "Thus saith the Lord: Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath

of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." It is so long, in fact, since the words were first uttered that there are those who have thought them archaic, moss-covered, Puritanical, and have branded them as good only for an age when men did not know any better. Yes, an ancient voice is that, but the echo of it comes now from the laboratory of science.

An experiment was made on a group of college students by an inquisitive savant. From day to day, for a period of eight weeks, the subjects were tested for "sensitiveness," by an electrical recording apparatus. Let the professor tell the outcome: "The results may be summarized briefly—there was an unmistakable tendency for the sensitiveness to be at its highest at the beginning of the week, and to sink steadily from day to day until its end, reaching the lowest point on Saturday; but with the return to Monday, following the break in the routine afforded by the Sunday recess, the sensitiveness was back at its former high position. The results of these tests are interpreted as positive evidence of cumulative fatigue from Monday to Saturday, inclusive; as showing that the repose of a single night, following a day of toil, does not afford complete restoration of the impaired nervous tissues, and furthermore the fact that the longer period furnished by the Sunday recess gives the extra time needed for the expulsion of the accumulated fatigue products, and the recovery of efficiency."

So speaks science. And so speaks experience. Was it not in the French revolutionary period, in the days of its wildest orgies, that they abolished the Sabbath Day by law and decreed one day in ten instead? Then they fixed it by law; but soon it was found that the nation was breaking down under it. The Decalogue could not be improved upon.

Why not accept the clear-cut voice of authority as it comes out of the past and as it finds confirmation in the present? The day's rest, the Sabbath Day, is an absolute necessity. Nature must have it.

And is there a better way to rest than by devoting the day to the worship of God, to the recreating of the spiritual life? God's voice is the voice of wisdom. Science but discovers it to be so.—"Zion's Herald."

A Modern Nehemiah's Words in England. "There is every reason to view with genuine anxiety many attempts to secularize the Lord's Day. That in war-time—and *such* war-time—men who would desire to be regarded as leaders of the people have so little regard for the stern moral issues and implications of the war, that they not only cry, 'Pleasure as usual,' but 'Pleasure *more* than usual,' is a symptom of moral callousness which should cause men everywhere to reflect. There is really no excuse for a further secular invasion of the Lord's Day on the ground that during six days of the week people are so slave-driven that Sunday recreation is an absolute necessity to their welfare. The people who crowd the Sunday shows are for the most part the same people who crowd the week-day shows. At this time of day it is pure hypocrisy to pretend that there is any real necessity for an increase in the pace of amusements in the interest of health. If our Sunday secularizers would be courageous and say plainly, 'We do not recognize any claim of God upon our life,' the hatefulness of the situation would be apparent; but they dare not say this, and hence they take refuge in phrases which smack of benevolence, but which scarcely mask their true intention. The real question to be faced is not at all that which some of the apologists would have the people believe, viz., how a certain day shall be spent: it is the deeper question as to whether God shall or shall not be recognized in human life. And the seriousness of those increasing attempts to filch a *Christian* Sunday—which would not be in existence but for the fact of Christ—lies in the fact that it reveals a temper among the people inimical to the law of God."

The Sabbath for Work or Pleasure is the Enemy of Better Things. What is the matter with the Dandelion? Evidently something serious is the matter, for everybody calls it a nuisance. I am sure the dandelion doesn't know it, for it is growing everywhere and having great fun every day. But everywhere people are trying to get rid of it; digging it up by the roots, putting horrid stuff on it to kill it and spending a great deal of time on the job.

What is the matter with the dandelion? Its flower certainly is beautiful. If it were rare people would rave over it and pay a price for it in the greenhouse. Why, then, is it hated? The answer is very simple. It hinders better things. It takes possession of the lawn, kills out the sweet clover and the tender grass and there's no room for anything else. After a while nothing is left but its own

coarse leaves and ugly stems, with their bald, homely heads. There is reason enough, surely, why we should try to banish it. It is the enemy of better things.

And that is just the reason why some things should be kept out of people's lives. They are not always bad things, but they hinder better things. It isn't enough to ask if a thing is really wrong in itself. The question is, Does it help people to do their best? or, Does it hinder them from doing their best? What if the thing you do robs you of time or strength needed for something better? What if it means poor lessons tomorrow? What if it sets the nerves edgewise, so that one is cross and fussy at home and not nice to live with? What if it shuts out the light of God's smile, as the big dandelion leaves bar the sun from the clover buds? God wants us to be our very best. And whatever hinders that ought to share the fate of the dandelions on the lawn.—Frank T. Bailey, in "The Congregationalist."

Sunday Tragedies. Take up any Monday morning newspaper and scan the first-page headlines. You know in advance what you will see: "Eight Men Drowned. Fishing Party's Boat Capsized in Squall. Only Four Escape." "Two Canoeists Lost. Tipped Overboard Trying to Change Seats." "Caught in the Undertow, Sky-larking Bather Carried Away before Eyes of Friends."

Then come the automobile accidents,—the careful of 'joy-riders,' a drunken driver, and the inevitable crash that kills three of them and maims two others; the racing machine wrecked because it was driven by some brainless son of Croesus with no regard for the lives either of those within it or of those without; the old man killed at a street-crossing because a chauffeur took chances.

Scattered through the paper you will find the accounts of other accidents, and worse still, of the broils that begin at a picnic, or a game of cards, or a drinking party, and that end in the flash of a knife or the report of a revolver. "Victim Died at Emergency Hospital. Assailant Held on Charge of Murder."

There is no exaggeration in the picture. Every Sunday in the summer tells the same grim story of folly, tragedy and crime; nor in the winter is the tale different, except that in place of accidents to bathers and boating-parties and automobiles, it is accidents to skaters and coasters and those who sail ice-boats. As for the crimes of drink and hot blood, all seasons are alike. On the calendar of the week our Sundays are printed in red.

The matter is not merely one of decreasing church attendance and the desecration of the Sabbath, or even of the "Continental Sunday." It is a question of self-restraint and self-respect. A person may be able to ride on Sunday in an automobile or in a boat, go bathing, or climb a mountain, or take a tramp in the woods, and do it in the spirit in which George Herbert's servant swept the room—"as for thy laws;" but those whose names appear in Monday morning's paper are not those who take their pleasures in that way.—"Youth's Companion."

II HALLOWING THE SABBATH DAY

The Jewish Way of Hallowing the Day. On Friday afternoons my parents came home early to wash and dress and remove from their persons every sign of labor. The great keys of the store were put away out of sight; the money bag was hidden in the feather-beds. My father put on his best coat and silk skull-cap; my mother replaced the cotton kerchief by the well-brushed wig. We children bustled around our parents, asking favors in the name of the Sabbath—"Mama, let Fetchke and me wear our new shoes, in honor of Sabbath"; or "Papa, will you take us to-morrow across the bridge? You said you would, on Sabbath." And while we adorned ourselves in our best, my grandmother superintended the sealing of the oven, the maids washed the sweat from their faces and the dvornik scraped his feet at the door.

My father and brother went to the synagogue, while we women and girls assembled in the living-room for candle prayer. The table gleamed with spotless linen and china. At my father's place lay the Sabbath loaf, covered over with a crocheted doily; and beside it stood the wine flask and kiddush cup of gold or silver. At the opposite end of the table was a long row of brass candlesticks, polished to perfection, with the heavy silver candlesticks in a shorter row in front; for my mother and grandmother were very pious and each used a number of candles, while Fetchke and I and the maids had one apiece.

After the candle prayer the women generally read in some book of devotion,

while we children amused ourselves in the quietest manner, till the men returned from synagogue. "Good Sabbath!" my father called as he entered, and "Good Sabbath! Good Sabbath!" we wished him in return. If he brought with him a Sabbath guest from the synagogue, some poor man without a home, the stranger was welcomed and invited in, and placed in the seat of honor, next to my father.

We all stood around the table while *kiddush*, or the blessing over the wine, was said, and if a child whispered or nudged another my father reproved him with a stern look, and began again from the beginning. But as soon as he had cut the consecrated loaf, and distributed the slices, we were at liberty to talk and ask questions, unless a guest was present, when we maintained polite silence.—Mary Antin in "The Promised Land."

Keeping The Lord's Day in China. The Rev. Charles E. Scott gives in the "Westminster Teacher" an interesting account of the way in which Swen Wen (Dr. Sun Yat Sen) once kept the Sabbath.

"In the early days of the Republic Swen Wen visited Peking, where he made known the readiness of the South to give up the seat of the Provincial Government in order that there might be one harmonious Republic. While there he was received by President Yuan with extraordinary pomp and by the people with hearty acclaim. For him the great sealed gates of the Forbidden City, through which none but emperors had ever passed, were thrown open. His reception was enough to turn the head of any man, especially when it was remembered that he was to return at once to Tsingtau, charged with a commission to mature and execute plans for providing China with a complete system of trunk line railways.

"The journey was made on a special train. All along the route he was received like a conquering hero. He arrived at Tsingtau Saturday evening, and was to leave for Shanghai the following Tuesday. There was much to do in the interval. He wanted to see all the rich Chinese merchants, hoping to get from them money for his railway projects, a task that would call for the utmost tact.

"The native business men at Tsingtau were planning to give him a handsome reception on Sunday. Proposing to make the day one round of pleasure, they assigned to each of the guilds one hour of the day. The program included a feast in each guild house. Swen Wen knew how important it was that he should not arouse the prejudices of these moneyed men. How easy it would be to persuade them to do his will when they were in a good humor, during the festivities of that Sunday!

"Yet on Saturday evening, when Swen Wen learned what had been arranged, he at once notified the committee in charge that he could not accept their invitation, as Sunday was his rest and worship day. There was anger, consternation, entreaty, but he remained true to his Christian convictions. The result was not what he had feared. His magnificent courage in opposing them took them by storm. Word was sent him that the program would be postponed till Monday. And he got his money."

The American Sabbath. The American Sabbath has given us leisure to consider the higher problems of life, to meditate, to enjoy the quietness of our homes, and to become acquainted with our own souls.

The Puritan Sabbath may have been narrow, and based often on a somewhat servile obedience to written precepts, but it has left to our nation a legacy of inestimable value. If we had not inherited from religion the rest-day it would be almost impossible to wrest it now from the terrible pace of business life. In giving us Sunday rest, religion has thrown its shield about one of the fundamental social needs of man, and about the whole army of toilers.

But this day, too, is threatened by the encroachments of profit-making. The loud amusements of Sunday resorts are not solely due to the popular love of pleasure; there is capital behind the resorts and transportation companies are eager for dividends. Moreover, the general tendency of industry to utilize its plant and its workers to the utmost will always make Sunday work tempting to it.

The church should cooperate with organized labor in protecting the rest-day. Both have an interest in its preservation; each should learn to understand and value the point of view of the other.—Professor Walter C. Rauschenbusch, in "Conservation of National Ideals."

"To Rest from Weary Work."

To rest from weary work one day of seven:
One day to turn our backs upon the world,
Its soil wash from us, and strive on to Heaven—
Whereto we daily climb, but quick are hurled
Down to the pit of human pride and sin.
Help me, ye powers celestial! to come nigh;
Ah, let me catch one little glimpse within
The heavenly city, lest my spirit die.
These be my guides, my messengers, my friends:
Books of wise poets; the musicians' art:
The ocean whose deep music never ends;
The silence of the forest's shadowy heart;
And, too, the brooding organ's solemn blare,
And kneeling multitudes' low-murmuring prayer.

—Richard Watson Gilder, in "Five Books of Song."

The Needed Quiet. In the city of Glasgow is a tower with its clock and chime of bells. At stated intervals these bells play tunes, which during the noise and din of the business week are scarcely heard in the street below; but on the Lord's Day when the noise is stilled the sweet music of some old tune is heard near and far.

So the Gospel bells are ringing all the week, but amidst all the din of life they are unheard, and were it not for the quiet of the Day of Rest many would never hear the tidings of Redeeming love.—Edward Last.

III WHERE THE RESPONSIBILITY LIES

Nehemiah Blamed the Rulers. The vigorous remedies applied by Nehemiah were administered first to the rulers. He sent for the nobles, and laid the blame at their doors. "Ye profane the day," he said. Men in authority are responsible for crimes which they could check, but prefer to wink at.

Nehemiah was governor for the Persian king, and so had a right to rate these nobles. In this day the people have the same right, and there are many social sins for which they should arraign civic and other authorities. Christian principles unflinchingly insisted on by Christian people, and brought to bear, by ballot-boxes and other persuasive ways, on what stands for conscience in some high places, would make a wonderful difference in many of the abominations of our great cities. Go to the nobles first and lay the burden on the backs that ought to carry it.—Dr. Alexander MacLaren.

Nehemiah Made the Right Men Responsible for the Carrying Out of His Reform. The guard of Levites may suggest that the execution of measures is best entrusted to those who are in sympathy with them. Levites make faithful watchmen. Many a promising measure for reformation has come to nothing because committed to the hands of functionaries who did not care for its success. The instruments are almost as important as the measures which they carry out.—Dr. MacLaren.

The Responsibility that Rests Upon the Nation. Among the acknowledged helps of the best character are at least two—the Lord's Day and the Lord's Book. The wise State will do what it can to preserve the one and encourage the study of the other. The Church does not ask that the State should try to compel people to attend church, and the children to learn the Bible. But it has a right to expect that the State, recognizing that the Day and the Book make for the nation's best life, shall be defender of both. The State should see to it that the Church, in its efforts to reach the nation's best, is not hampered by the competition of greedy men. And it should see to it that the Best of Books is within the reach of every child within its borders. So a State, believing that its best wealth is its people's character, should fight its foes and help its friends. It can't make character; but, so far as it can, it both will not let it be hindered, and will encourage it.—David Ross, in the "Southern Cross" of Melbourne.

A Great Educator's Practices. Edward Thring was a model teacher who believed in collective punishment for individual offenses. "I am not going to waste words on A and B," he would say. "I hold the whole school responsible

for these wrong things. Any society can put down offenses, if it chooses." Sometimes when some boy committed an offense all the boys of his department were excluded from games for a week and compelled to take their exercise walking two and two attended by a master. When anything wrong occurred he did not ask "Who did it?" but "Who was there?" He would say, "I don't know who the offenders are, and I don't want to know. They would not have done it, if the rest of you disliked it enough." He made all the boys anxious to prevent misdemeanors, lest they all be punished for the fault of one.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 17. "He who profanes the Sabbath desecrates his own nature, stultifies his better self, and extinguishes that glowing spark which marks him apart from the soulless and inanimate world around him."

Verse 19. There will be no trade if you shut the gates the night before: there will be little drunkenness if there are no liquor shops: it is quite true that people cannot be made virtuous by legislation, but it is also true that they may be saved from temptations to become vicious by it.—Dr. Alexander Mac-laren.

Verse 22. However zealous and strenuous our endeavors, and however self-sacrificing our service, we never get beyond the need of the infinite mercy of God.—J. Stuart Holden.

Verse 22.

O day of rest! How beautiful, how fair,
How welcome to the weary and the old!
Day of the Lord! and truce to earthly cares!
Day of the Lord, as all our days should be!—Longfellow.

The Golden Text. Remember the Sabbath day and it will keep you holy.—Phillips Brooks.

THE LESSON'S MEANING FOR US

"Believing as I do, that the great principles which underlie the due observance of Sunday are public worship and rest, I resolve to do all I can to discourage, as far as possible, such employments on Sunday as would prevent either myself, my servants, or others for whom I am responsible, from being able to carry out these principles."

How can our Sunday be made of greater use for the better things of life?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The keeping of the "Sabbath." See "The Biblical World," Feb. 1916; "The Outlook," Jan. 25, 1913, pp. 158-160; Feb. 14, 1914, p. 343.
2. Where the responsibility lies. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What does the word "Malachi" mean and from what verse in the book is the word probably taken for a title? (*Guide*, p. 452.) 2. To what are verses 1-6 an answer? (*Guide*, p. 450.) 3. Of what sins does Malachi accuse his nation in the first two chapters of the book? What sins does he mention in this third chapter? 4. What impious offerings had the sons of Levi made? (Mal. 1.6-14.) 5. Who was the messenger sent to prepare the way of the Son of God? (Mark 1.1-8.) 6. What does Paul say about giving in 1 Cor. 16.1-4; 2 Cor. 8.1-6; 9.1-15; Phil. 4.1-20? 7. Who boasted in a prayer, "I give tithes of all that I get"? (Luke 18.9-14.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Explain the figure of speech in verse 2. (*Guide*, p. 451.) 2. What is "the devourer," verse 11? (*Guide*, p. 451.) 3. How had the people of Judah "robbed God"? 4. How may we "rob God"? 5. How large a part of one's time or talent or money should be given to the service of God? 6. Why do we celebrate Christmas? 7. Why do we give gifts at Christmas? 8. How may we keep the Christmas spirit through the year?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Learn the poem on page 453. Write "XXI: Enforcing the Law of the Sabbath."

PREPARATION FOR THE MESSIAH

Golden Text

Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 3:2

LESSON Malachi 3:1-12 MEMORIZE verses 1, 2

1 Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. 2 But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. 5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner *from his right*, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts. 6 For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

7 From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? 8 Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough *to receive it*. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jehovah of hosts.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Coming of the Lord in Judgment, 1-6.

II. An Appeal for the Payment of Tithes to the Lord, 7-12.

1. *Behold, I send.* In the preceding verse the prophet represents the people of Judah as complaining that the wicked please God, that God is not just in prospering them while they, the righteous, suffer. "Where is the God of Justice?" they ask. Now the prophet represents God as replying to them, encouraging them with a promise full of hope.—*My messengers.* God sent his people many messengers. Nehemiah was God's messenger to them. "He came suddenly to the temple and cleansed it (Neh. 13:8); he was 'a swift witness' (Mal. 3:5) against all wrongdoers (Neh. 13:25); he appeared in the spirit of Elijah (Mal. 4:5), enforcing the law of Moses" (Marcus Dods). But John the Baptist was the preeminent forerunner of the Lord (Mark 1:1-8).—*He will prepare the way for me.* Compare Isa. 40:3-5; Mt. 3:1-12.—*Will suddenly come to his temple.* Zechariah had promised that Jehovah would come to his Temple, 8:3. The former glory was lacking in the rebuilt Temple, and to the prophet it seemed as though the Lord was no longer present with them.—*The messenger of the covenant.* Who comes with God's promise, is part of the covenant or agreement with his people.

2. *Who can abide the day of his coming?* He would come as Judge, the prophet reminds them, and who among them was ready to be judged? See

Amos 5.18-20; Isa. 33.14-16.—*He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.* He will separate, as it were, the pure metal among the people from the dross, the evil from the good as soap separates the dirt from cloth.

3. *He will purify the sons of Levi.* The judgment begins with those who ministered in the Temple. "How much dross is there in the people of God, how their very virtues, prayers and good works are mingled with inferior elements! It is the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ to expel the latest atom of the base and bad" (Watkinson).—*They shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness.* Read the prophet's rebuke of the priests for their impious offerings, 1.6-14.

4. *Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah.* See 1.10.

6. *Therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.* "God does not turn from his love, nor cancel his promises, nor alter his purposes of mercy because of our sins. If God could have changed, the departure from him of 'the sons of Jacob' would have driven him to abandon his purposes; but they still live—living evidences of his long suffering" (Maclaren). The "One Volume Commentary" says that the Hebrew means "but you" (emphatic) rather than "therefore you," and suggests a corruption in the text, the argument seeming to be: "I have not changed, but you have not kept your part of the covenant; you have not performed my words."

7. *From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances.* Through many generations had Judah sinned, and they were reaping the fruits of all their sin.—*Return unto me.* Compare Zech. 1.2-6.—*Wherein shall we return?* Often in this book the people are represented as answering back, instead of accepting words of reproof. See 1.2, 6, 7; 2.14, 17; 3.8, 13.

8. *In tithes and offerings.* "In withholding these they robbed God, and to this, their crime, are due the locusts and bad seasons which have affected them. In our temptation to see in this a purely legal spirit, let us remember that the neglect to pay the tithes was due to a religious cause, unbelief in Jehovah, and that the return to belief in him could not, therefore, be shown in a more practical way than by the payment of tithes" (George Adam Smith).

9. *Ye are cursed with the curse.* The curse which had been threatened: Mal. 2.2; Dt. 28.15-68; Lev. 26.14-33.

10. *The store-house.* The places where the dues for the Temple services were placed.—*If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.* "The lattices of heaven are open, not to pour down, as of old, fiery destruction, but to make way for the gentle descent of God's blessing, which will more than fill every vessel set to receive it. This is the universal law, not always fulfilled in increase of outward goods, but in the better riches of communion and of large possession in God himself. He suffers no man to be his creditor, but more than returns our gifts, as legends tell of some peasant who brought his king a poor tribute of fruits of his fields, and went away from the presence-chamber with a jewel in his hand" (Maclaren).

11. *The devourer.* The locusts, or other pests that devoured the grain. Compare Joel 1.4; Amos 4.2.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *And fear not me.* The *hireling* was oppressed by not giving him the wages agreed upon, or by postponing the payment that meant the daily bread of himself and family. These simple people, often too ignorant or indolent for skilled labor, live from hand to mouth and sleep peacefully, saying with regard to the morrow, "The Lord will provide." The man who fears God understands this, and is on his guard in dealing with them.—*The widow, and the fatherless.* When a man has to administer the estate of a deceased brother, he may be tempted by the inexperience of the widow and the ignorance of the children to use the money for his own benefit, or make it appear that it was invested and lost. But there is one who cannot be thus cheated, and the oriental understands what follows when he is cheated in turn by others, or family cares multiply, or a beloved son dies or stumbles on the way of life.—*That turn aside the sojourner from his right.* The sojourner in a locality might be an Israelite or Gentile, but being only an individual with his family he had no relatives to support him and retaliate when he was oppressed. His harvest-field might be grazed upon with impunity, or doubly taxed without redress, his vineyard robbed, his camel or

mule taken for temporary government service, or he might be intimidated and compelled to sell his house and land to a resident who wished to buy them.—Dr. George M. Mackie, in "Sunday-school Times."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What did our first lesson of the year say about the birth of the Messiah? What does John 1.14 say? What does John 3.16 say?

The Book of Malachi. The word "Malachi" means "my messenger"; it was probably given as a title to the book because of its use in this first verse of our lesson, 3.1. The book belongs either to the time after the rebuilding of the Temple, and before Ezra and Nehemiah instituted their reforms, or to the period between the two visits of Nehemiah to Jerusalem, when the people had failed to live up to his reform measures. The book reproves the priests for dishonoring God by unworthy services in the Temple, and the people for dishonoring him by unrighteous deeds.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. We have heard in our lessons this year about many kings. Who are some of them? During thousands of years young kings have been born in palaces and laid in gorgeous cradles beneath softest coverings. (As Mary Stewart writes in "A King among Men.") On the cradle and the coverlet there has generally been a crown, a sign that this baby was different from the children born into humble homes, where no golden cradle or embroidered robe lay waiting to receive them. Thus they grew up, with the crown always before their eyes, on tiny caps and cloaks, emblazoned upon chariots, and embroidered even upon their handkerchiefs. It reminded them every day that there were two classes of boys, those who held rank and ruled, and those who were born to work for their masters. But one starry night many years ago a King was born, the greatest who ever came into this world, and over his head there was emblazoned no crown, no palace opened its doors to receive him, and no court lady placed him reverently in a splendid bed. You all know the story of his birth, the birth of Jesus Christ.

For Older Pupils. Begin with a talk about Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah. See below.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Prophecies of the Messiah. To those who believe in a God who governs human thought, and prepares his own way before his face, it will not be hard to believe that this element in prophecy is, indeed, a coming event casting its shadow before. The stretching out of human hands in hope and desire, and the coming of the Unspeakable Gift in the fulness of time, were parts of the same process. During the world's morning twilight of expectation God took many an elect soul up the watch tower with him, that he and they might look together at the kindling East and tell others the signs of promise that they saw upon the sky. And when Christ came, it was not hard for him to find in many psalms and prophecies things concerning himself.—J. M. E. Ross, in "The Self-Portraiture of Jesus."

God Prepares for the End from the Beginning. Eminent scientists affirm that in plant and animal life abundant evidence is found to indicate a prevision and definite preparation of the earth for man; they believe in a foreordained purpose to create man, and in a foreordained method of the Supreme Mind to make the earth a fit habitation for him. And if the naturalist finds prevision and preparation for man in the constitution and development of nature, is it difficult to detect that in all God's government the purpose of redemption was never lost sight of through thousands of years, and that there was a gradual preparation for the manifestation of the Messiah? If the creation prophesied humanity as its goal, and at many points revealed its preparation for the advent, does not history with equal clearness show the Redeemer as its goal, and reveal a steady preparation for his incarnation? God takes large views; he sees the end, and prepares for the end from the beginning.

But how different was the fact of our Lord's manifestation from the conception that the Jewish people had formed concerning it! They expected that the

Messiah would bring them national freedom and glory, material prosperity and enjoyment, and yet when he came his mission was one of heart-searching, of purifying discipline, of severe righteousness.

Today are not multitudes laboring under a similar delusion? They are looking to Christ for material and political advantages—raised wages, more leisure, better food and clothes, multiplied holidays—and they aver that Christianity is hardly worth having, except as it secures such things.

Very different indeed is Christ's mission. He did not come to put governments into the melting-pot, but to put us into the crucible. He does not bring gold; he seeks to make us gold. Financial and governmental advantages are by-products of Christianity; it primarily addresses the conscience, requires purity of heart, an offering of righteousness.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Following the Gleam. In the Old Testament one seems to be like a traveler in the deep woods. The shadows often lie dark upon the ground. At times the sky itself is lost. Yet there are many signs and markings that point in one direction. Many pathways run in and out where other feet have trod, and there is one *clear way* that seems to break irresistibly through all the tangle of the woods toward the light of day. Little by little the signs increase. The traveler's hope beats high. Something akin to spiritual excitement possesses him. The awe of an approaching event creeps upon him. Suddenly the way breaks out into an open space and the traveler is flooded by a great light. This is a faint description of the approach of a sensitive heart, through the types and prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, to the Christ of the New Testament. What joy of discovery! What reward to the heart's deep desire! What an open vista in the darkness of life!—Edgar Whitaker Work, in "The Fascination of the Book."

The Dream and the Reality. It was one of the beautiful and pathetic beliefs of the old Norsemen, quoted by Mr. Balfour in his "Foundation of Belief," that when a man died his spirit survived him, and haunted as a ghost for a long time the scenes of his earthly life. "At first," says he, "vivid and almost life-like, it slowly waned and faded, until, at length, it vanished, leaving behind it no trace or memory of its spectral presence among the throngs of living men." Let us reverse the legend, and then apply it to this subject. For long ages the faint adumbration of a divine deliverer haunted the minds of men. At first dim and spectral, the vision grew upon the minds of men, becoming with each age more definite and perfect. It fortified and invigorated the failing heart of the world with a new hope. Others besides Balaam learned to say, "I shall see him but not now; I shall behold him but not nigh. There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel." Before the mind of a Plato as well as an Isaiah, this slowly growing vision passes, and each foresees the advent of some perfectly just One, by whom the world should be saved. Out of the films and spectral profundities of the future this face grew into clearness—this figure emerged into distinctness—until at last the spiritual and ghostly put on a human form, and God became flesh and dwelt among us. The dream was ended—the reality had come. Hope had fulfilled itself—faith was to begin. The vision was no more a vision; the palpable Redeemer spoke indeed "with man's voice by the marvelous sea," and stood before men with a human brow—and all this happened—"That it might be fulfilled."—W. J. Dawson, in "The Divine Challenge."

II THERE IS BORN TO YOU THIS DAY A SAVIOR

(Alternate Lesson: Matthew 2:1-12)

The Gift of Gifts.

Thou Blessed Son of God, once lowly lying,
A little Babe in human form,
Gird us weak-hearted with thy strength undying:
With thy pure love our service warm.

May we to thee bring worship purer, sweeter,
Than did the shepherds, Lord, of old;
Make haste afar, with gladder steps and fleet,
Thy healing tidings to unfold.

Thou unto whom the Magi brought their treasure—
The Child divine, our glorious king,
Grant us, in richer love, in fuller measure,
Our offerings to thy shrine to bring.—Richard Arnold Greene.

When a Little Black Boy First Heard about the Christ Child. Far over in Africa one day a missionary passed through a village. He stayed only a few hours, but while he was there he gathered the people together and told them the Christmas story about Bethlehem and about the wonderful Child who was born there. You know the story well, but to these poor black people it was all new. Among the crowd that gathered about the missionary was a little black boy, who did not take his eyes off the minister's face once during the talk. The minister smiled at him when he said good-bye, and asked him if he liked the story. He nodded his head and smiled back. "Then," said the minister, "tell it to some one who needs Christ's help very much."

After the missionary had gone away, the little boy thought of a little forlorn shepherd boy on the hills who had a cruel master. Once the shepherd boy had helped the other boy when he was hurt, and had taken him home, so it was this shepherd boy that the little African missionary boy thought of right away. He went to hunt for him and found him taking care of some sheep on the plains. When he told him, as best he could, about the Babe of Bethlehem, the shepherd boy said: "I am going to find him. Is he at the station at Kuruman?"

"I think he must be there," said the little black boy, "because they sing songs about him there."

The little shepherd boy went on his search, and he really found the station, and good people there who were glad to take care of him and tell him more of the wonderful story. He did not see the Babe of Bethlehem, but he found the Savior in just the same way any child can find him by going to him in prayer, with a loving trustful heart.—"Picture Story Paper."

The Glad Evangel. When the Child of Nazareth was born, the sun, according to the Bosnian legend, "leaped in the heavens, and the stars around it danced. A peace came over mountain and forest. Even the rotten stump stood straight and healthy on the green hillside. The grass was beflowered with open blossoms, incense sweet as myrrh pervaded upland and forest, birds sang on the mountain top, and all gave thanks to the great God."

It is naught but an old folk tale, but it has truth hidden in its heart, for a strange, subtle force, a spirit of genial good will, a new-born kindness, seem to animate child and man alike when the world pays its tribute to the "Heaven-sent Youngling," as the poet Drummond calls the Infant Christ.

When the three Wise Men rode from the East into the West on that "first, best Christmas night," they bore in their saddle-bags three caskets filled with gold and frankincense and myrrh, to be laid at the feet of the manger-cradled Babe of Bethlehem. Beginning with this old, old journey, the spirit of giving has crept into the world's heart. As the Magi came bearing gifts, so do we also; gifts that relieve want, gifts that are sweet and fragrant with friendship, gifts that mean service, gifts inspired still by the Star that shone over the City of David nearly two thousand years ago.—Kate Douglas Wiggin, in "Golden Numbers."

The Sunrise of the Bible. The birth of Jesus is the sunrise of the Bible. Toward this point the aspirations of the prophets and the poems of the psalmists were directed as the heads of flowers are turned toward the dawn. From this point a new day began to flow silently over the world,—a day of faith and freedom, a day of hope and love. When we remember the high meaning that has come into human life and the clear light that has flooded softly down from the manger-cradle in Bethlehem of Judea, we do not wonder that mankind has learned to reckon history from the birth of Jesus, and to date all events by the years before or after the Nativity of Christ.—Dr. Van Dyke, in "The Christ Child in Art."

A Wish. To Old and Young, with the years behind and the years ahead, years that show but a span in the centuries since the Light first shone from Bethlehem upon the paths of service, humility and sacrifice, and gave to all the ages a spirit that has made them one; to Young and Old, treading with gladness these lighted paths, even though not always knowing whence the Light comes—to all,

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

III CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

What Shall We Give at Christmas? Christmas is the one day in the whole year when everyone brings most gladly his whole tithe into God's treasury, for then the spirit of Christ reigns and the joy of giving is felt to the uttermost. At this time charity is personal, not "official"; brotherly, not condescending; genuine, not perfunctory. People of all sorts of interests are drawn together by the common tie of brotherhood. Practical help and Christmas cheer are brought to the houses of the poor, and the sick and the lonely are remembered in beautiful ways.

Miss Margaret Slattery gives a most interesting account in "The Congregationalist" of the way in which one Sunday-school observed Christmas.

Just after Thanksgiving the parents of the children were invited to a parents' supper at the church and there, after a social hour, discussed America's Christless Christmas. Earnestly they pledged themselves to let their children hear them speak lovingly and reverently of the great day that saw his birth, to lead them to think and say, "What shall I give?" not, "What am I going to get?" They agreed not to let their children hear anything about gifts of obligation or remarks about those to whom one must give but does not want to give.

During the first week in December the Christmas chorus of young people was formed. Those who took part were asked to present their time for given periods each week as a gift to the Christ whose birthday they were to help make a day of joy. The teachers organized their classes into different groups to trim Christmas trees which should be taken on the night before Christmas to houses where illness, poverty or sin had robbed little children of their right to the happiness of Christ's birthday. The Christmas plans for the Children of the Sunday-school were left to the adult classes.

When the night before Christmas came all felt that a new spirit had stolen into the festival. The programs were white and gold with the face of the Boy Christ upon the cover. On either side of the pulpit platform were the trees, one for each of the three departments, and on the pulpit itself a large box covered with green and white—the property of the boys and girls of high-school age. The trees were dark. But while the chorus choir sang, what a transformation took place!

"There's a wonderful tree, a wonderful tree
That happy children rejoice to see,"

sang the chorus, and bright balls, tinsel, strings of popcorn and cranberries and at the top of each tree a shiny golden star found their way from the children's hands to the waiting trees. Together the children repeated the verses that tell the story of the wandering shepherds and the wise men bearing gifts, and then another group of children with arms filled with gifts surrounded the trees. Around the box on the pulpit the older boys and girls were standing, and there two boys took the carefully wrapped packages and laid them in it. The box would go twenty miles next day to a lumber camp to remind the men and boys that it was Christ's day. The trees would go that night to houses that did not dream of the joyful surprise that was waiting them.

Then as the children were about to start home after the last carols were sung, the doors leading into the chapel were opened and the children were asked to march in. There they found a tree that seemed to touch the ceiling, gloriously lighted with tiny electric bulbs. It was the gift of the men and women to the children of the school. It held Bible Stories for the little children, Bibles for the Boy Scouts, pocket Bibles for the older boys and dainty Bibles for the girls. It had besides boxes of candy for every child. It was a joy to see the glorified and beaming faces of the children as they made a great circle about the tree. Ten of the girls sang, "'Tis because he came to earth this day." It was a Christmas celebration never forgotten.

Let us not Rob God at Other Times. We do great things at Christmas, but do we not rob God at other times? Wherein do we rob God? In tithes and offerings. The spirit of giving must be made permanent. Take to heart these words of a writer (Harry F. Ward) in "The Sunday School Journal":

"It is not enough for a school to play My Lady Bountiful, distributing with lavish hand and then forgetting the recipients of the gifts. Such giving in the end does more harm than good. It is so much easier to give than to share,

and the spirit of Christ is the spirit of sharing, the giving of strength and knowledge, patience and sympathy, the infusion of life itself. A basket would have fed the family at Thanksgiving, but the folks who invited them to their table as equals found out all about their needs and their weaknesses and were able to help in reality, finding a job for the man, release from the loan sharks, and strengthening of the weak bones of the lame child.

"If a school or a class gives dinners to families at Christmas, let them take certain of these families under their permanent care, live with them for a year, or more if necessary, find out the causes of their need, and remove them. This is to continue the Spirit of Christmas through the year, to make every day Christ's day, for he wants prevention, not simply relief. His salvation includes wholeness. The school that can restore to wholeness of life some broken family is making a permanent Christmas gift to the community, especially if in so doing it can lead the community to discover and apply its own resources for the removal of distress.

"It is an ultimate question that is raised by the Christmas spirit. On one day there is good will and brotherhood, so that gifts are offered without condescension and taken without the loss of independence. On one day folks of all sorts draw together on common ground and armies have refused to fight. This is what happens when the world submits to the spirit of Christ. It thinks of giving, not getting; of service, not rule; of justice as well as charity; of brotherhood, and not of strife. What is possible in a measure on one day is possible in the same measure on all days. To demonstrate the life of service in continued endeavor before the community, to witness brotherhood in sustained deed—this is the demand made upon all Christians by the Christmas spirit."

What if Every Day were Christmas? "Heaven defend us from such a misfortune!" you say. For Christmas is one of the most dreaded joys of life. But this terror at the mention of Christmas is due to our having commercialized the day until it is a synonym for anxiety lest we give some one a present of less (or more) value than the present this some one has given us.

Yet in reality Christmas is a bit of prophetic idealism. It is a testimony to our persistent belief that our present economic order is not ideal. Even the most brutal industrialism cannot destroy this faith. And our annual idealism is so simple; "It is more blessed to give than to bargain."

On Christmas Day all of our principles of political economy get thrown into the waste basket, and life bows before that banished master, generosity. Even the most commercialized of us want to make some one else happy. We actually are ready to give something to make this happiness secure.

Supposing this attitude of mind were with us the rest of the year. How trade would flourish! For Christmas Day is a perennial denial of the notion that the world must be selfish in order to be prosperous. To make the giving spirit dominant in life would be to set all the manufactories running overtime and shut up every bureau of charity.

Then, too, Christmas stands for joy because others are joyful. It is the day when we forget competition, class struggles, and all the other terrible things of our economical life. Indeed, we more than forget them; we defy them. To find happiness in making others happy—did ever any Utopia dream of that? Yet that is what Christmas actually does for a scheming, quarrelsome, selfish, capitalistic world.

Christmas is a proclamation that once a year the world may take Jesus seriously. He came to bring good tidings of love and to embody that gospel as a ruling force in men's lives. His mission has not been a failure, although none of us would say that it is yet a complete success.

Christmas Day comes nearer to being Christianized than any other day in the year. On that day we have a little better understanding of Jesus and his mission. The memory of the Christ Child helps us put into operation some of the ideals of the Christ Man. And thus for one blessed day we get an intimation of what Christ wanted us to make every day in the year.

Now must we look wisely at one another and say that Christmas cannot come every day; that giving cannot replace getting; that success must always be purchased at the cost of some one's failure; that Jesus spoke too figuratively to be taken seriously; that mountain tops are fine for visions but poor places for crops—and the world needs crops?

Who is so blasphemous as to deny his heart's best hope? Why not have Christmas every day? Of course, not a mere holiday, but a day of joyous fraternity when we are less interested in getting than in giving pleasure: when men will not be forced to stifle their generous instincts in the interest of thrift; when we shall take Jesus Christ more seriously and find the evidence of the wisdom of our obedience in the joy of an entire world.

And we shall have it. For some day the kingdom of God will have come, and society will be with its Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration.

And every day will be Christmas then.—Editorial in "The Biblical World."

We Give Thee but Thine Own.

We give thee but thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is thine alone,
A gift, O Lord, from thee.

—W. W. How.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Verse 1. From the Old Testament point of view the progress is made from the knowledge of Christ to the knowledge of Jesus: from the New Testament point of view, the progress is made from the knowledge of Jesus to the knowledge of Christ.—Bengel.

Verse 7. Some of us have learned only too well to raise questions about the method of salvation instead of accepting it, and to dabble in theology instead of making sure work of return.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Do we rob God by withholding our money or talent or time from his service? How much of our income do we spend upon ourselves and how much for missions and church and philanthropy?

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.

—Phillips Brooks.

Who is there to whom our class may give on Christmas Day? How may we give so as to bring only happiness to the recipients?

Are we farther on in all goodness today than we were a year ago? "Are we as impatient, as fretful, as resentful, as sensitive to all slight, neglect, and injury as we used to be? Or are we loftier in mind, larger in thought, fuller in charity, more hopeful regarding the worst, more Christlike? Sometimes it is well to sit down at our own judgment seat and receive the sentence."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The benefits of systematic giving.
2. The Messianic Prophecies. See page XLV of the "One Volume Commentary."
3. The Meaning of Christmas. See the "Atlantic Monthly," Dec., 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Assign whatever written work you wish to have brought to class for the review. In Note-Books have written "XXII: Preparation for the Messiah."

Note. If you have no further use for this *Guide*, will you not send it to a missionary in the Philippines, where this year's course of lessons is studied next year? Write to Dr. Price, whose address is given on page 23 of our Introduction.

REVIEW. GOD'S REDEEMING LOVE

Golden Text

With Jehovah there is lovingkindness, and with him is plenteous redemption. Psalm 130.7

READ Psalms 123 and 124

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

Ask each of your pupils to come prepared to give an account of a special lesson. If there are fewer than twelve pupils in the class, assign two lessons to some of them. As each lesson is being told, write its outline on the board.

- | | |
|--|---|
| I. Praise
prayer
promise | II. Proclamation
priests
latters |
| III. Work
weeping
orship | IV. Worship
weighing
elfare |
| V. Boastful
enhadad | VI. Nehemiah's
ews |
| V. Drunk
defeated | VI. Prayer
erfect] |
| VII. Artaxerxes'
answer | VIII. Psalm of
raise |
| IX. Removing the Rubbish
rebuilding the Temple
resorting to Arms | X. Reading God's Law
repeating and Obeying
rejoicing and Giving |
| XI. Profaning the Sabbath
purifying the Levites | XII. Preparing for the Lord
aying One's Debt |

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

For a written review, copy each quotation below on a separate sheet of paper, as many of each as there are pupils in your class, and give one to each pupil. After he has written a brief account of the lesson to which the quotation alludes, let him have another quotation.

As an oral review much interest will be aroused by letting all who recognize the allusion signify this after the reading of each quotation. Call for the statement.

Since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, Calvin and Luther, Wesley and Moody, the Scriptures have been the dynamics of all deep and abiding revivals.—Calvin W. Laufer.

In men's experience and life, Righteousness and Peace cannot be rent apart. The only secret of tranquillity is to be good.—Alexander Maclaren.

No man will do worthy work at rebuilding the walls who has not wept over the ruins.—Alexander Maclaren.

"God's benefits will not be before our eyes unless our sins be also before our eyes."

"He was no mystic or recluse, he was a soldier, a statesman, a man of affairs; but he built his life on prayer. The best man of action is the man who recognizes God before he goes into action."

Let the Christian not count as lost the seeds he sows, or the tears in which he steepens them, but let him rest on that word "doubtless" which is God's guarantee.—F. B. Meyer.

"The heavens are helping you. The world of spirits is your ally. The unseen universe is on your side. In ways you cannot guess, with an intimacy of

approach which you can never know, righteousness is looking down from heaven on your endeavor to be a righteous man."

God covers sin, but man must not cover sin before God.—Pewnee.

"God's purposes were fulfilled, whatever may have been the motives by which the Persian king was consciously actuated."

Help us with the grace of courage, that we be none of us cast down when we sit lamenting amid the ruins of our happiness or our integrity; touch us with the fire of thy altar, that we may be up and doing to rebuild thy city.—R. L. Stevenson.

For all rearing of the true temple, harps of praise are no less necessary than swords and trowels, and we shall do no right work for God unless we do it with melody in our hearts. Our lives must be full of music if we are to lay even one stone in the temple.—Dr. Maclaren.

It is not only that God sends his messengers to the world, nor only that his loving eye looks down upon it, nor only that he gives that which is good; but it is that the whole heaven, as it were, lowers itself to touch earth, that God comes down to dwell and walk among men.—Dr. Maclaren.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. By what king of what country were the Jews freed?
2. Repeat a verse of the 103d Psalm.
3. What did Ezra do before he started on his journey?
4. How were the people encouraged during the rebuilding of the Temple?
5. How were the Jews helped on their way to Jerusalem?
6. For what did Nehemiah pray?
7. Repeat a verse of the 126th Psalm.
8. How did Malachi say the people had robbed God?
9. While some of the people worked on the walls of Jerusalem, what did others do?
10. What did a king of Syria boast, and why did he not carry it out?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. What lessons did the Jews learn during their life in Babylon?
2. Who was Cyrus, and for what is he remembered in Biblical history?
3. Who was Ezra, and what did he accomplish?
4. What feelings were exhibited at the dedication of the Temple, and what caused them?
5. How did Nehemiah show business skill?
6. What lessons for us has Nehemiah's prayer?
7. What two prophets helped on the building of the Temple?
8. Describe the reading of the Law at Jerusalem.
9. What modern characteristics of the Jews appear in the Jews of our lessons?
10. Repeat either the 85th, 103d, or 126th Psalm.

REVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

1. Who first separated the books of Ezra and Nehemiah?
2. Would it have been possible for Ezra to write all the book that bears his name?
3. What sources of information must he have had for part of it?
4. Would it have been possible for Nehemiah to write all the book that bears his name?
5. What part of the book of Ezra did Ezra write?
6. What part of the book of Nehemiah did Nehemiah write?
7. Who wrote the rest of the books?
8. When were the books written?
9. What period of history is covered by the books?
10. At what point does Nehemiah take up the history of the Jews?
11. What breaks are there in the narrative?
12. Write an outline of each book.
13. Mention two peculiarities of the book of Nehemiah.
14. What value for us has Ezra?
15. What value for us has Nehemiah?

16. How do the headlines of the Psalms classify them?
17. When were they written?
18. Who wrote the Psalms?
19. When were the Psalms written?
20. Mention some of the groups into which the Psalms are divided.
21. What are the themes of the Psalms?
22. What are their characteristics?
23. What literary value have the Psalms?
24. What spiritual value have they?

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Before class-time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture should be covered with paper attached at the top so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls. Or, copy the pictures by tracing on thin paper and paste the copies on twelve cards; let the pupils write the stories beneath the pictures.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

I. A man who looks very happy is praying. His prayer is full of gratitude. For what is he thankful?

II. Messengers are going throughout a country with good news for God's people. What is it? The people of the land are bringing gifts and the king himself is sending large plates of gold and silver and other utensils. Why?

III. This is a busy scene. A great building is being put up, and the people are singing as they work. Now the building is completed, and the people are offering sacrifices. What is the building? What did the people say as they sang?

IV. On the banks of a river a large crowd is gathered, and they are praying. Now they are setting off on a journey. Who are they? For what are they praying? Where are they going?

V. Before the walls of a city an army with its horses and chariots is encamped. Messengers from the army are entering the city and talking with the king. Now they have gone and a wise man is telling the king something which pleases him. In the camp before the city kings and officers are drinking. A large company of young men are approaching. A battle takes place and the people that were in camp are fleeing. What was the city? What did the messengers tell the king? What did the wise man tell him? Why were the kings in the camp defeated?

VI. I see a beautiful palace. Men are approaching. Now they have entered the palace and are telling something to a man there which makes him very sad. Now he is praying. Where was the palace? Who was the man to whom sad news was brought? What was the news? For what did he pray?

VII. The man whom we saw in the last scene is handing a king something in a glass. The king questions him, and after talking a while the man looks happy. Now he is setting off on a journey. Who is the man? What was he doing for the king? About what did he and the king talk? What made him happy? Where did he go?

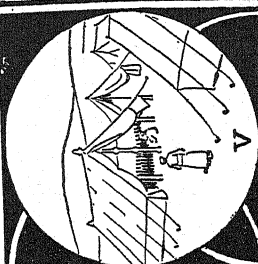
VIII. A man is talking about the goodness of God. Tell something which he said.

IX. It seems strange to see some people here working with stones and trowels and others standing by holding spears and bows and shields. What are the men building? What are the other men doing? Why?


X. Here there is a large, high pulpit. A man there is reading from a book to a great crowd of people below him who are listening eagerly. Now they are bowing to the ground. Who is the man and what is he reading? Why are the people bowing?

XI. The gates of a great city are wide open, and asses are being driven in with heavy burdens on their backs. In the fields around the city other men are working. The ruler of the city is greatly displeased at the sight. Why? What does he say to the people?


XII. It is night. The stars are shining. There are shepherds with their flocks in the field. Suddenly a great light shines about them. Tell the rest of the glad story.




V



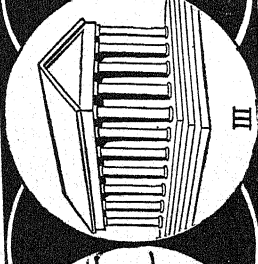
VI



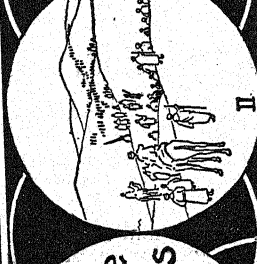
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IV
FOR THE
HOUSE OF GOD



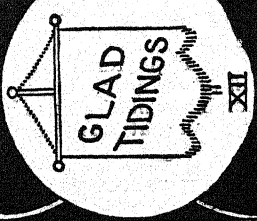
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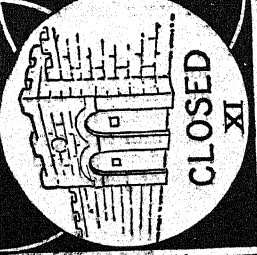
II

Jehovah
hath done
great things
for us

I



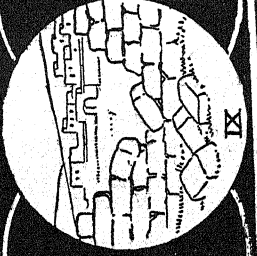
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GLAD
TIDINGS



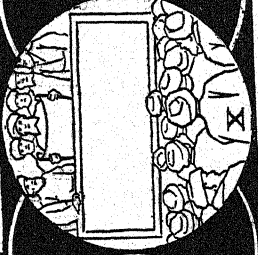
XI
CLOSED

THANKS-
GIVING

VIII



IX



X

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER

With Jehovah there is lovingkindness,
And with him is plenteous redemption.

Psalms 130. 7

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verse which:

1. Tells how to read and teach the Bible.
2. Speaks about God's forgiveness.
3. Speaks about God's kindness.
4. Speaks about God's pity.
5. Speaks about God's mercy.
6. Speaks about the hand of God.
7. Speaks about how God deals with us.
8. Speaks about the coming of a messenger of God.
9. Talks about gladness.
10. Talks about robbing God.
11. Talks about fear and fighting.
12. Talks about praising God.
13. Gives directions about eating and remembering those who have nothing to eat.
14. Tells when not to boast.

Give the book and chapter in which each of these verses is found:

Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
Truth springeth out of the earth;
And righteousness hath looked down from heaven.

For he is good, and his loving-kindness endureth for ever toward Israel.

Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people;
Thou hast covered all their sin.

Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day.

Like as a father pitieth his children,
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.

Jehovah hath done great things for us,
Whereof we are glad.

Jehovah is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Bless Jehovah, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless Jehovah, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits.

Who spoke these words?

Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared.

What evil is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts.

Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast as he that putteth it off.

The hand of our God is upon all that seek him, for good.

The joy of Jehovah is your strength.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is his loving-kindness toward them that fear him.

A REVIEW CONTEST

Let two classes unite for this review, each with a leader. Let the teacher of Class A ask the questions, and the teacher of Class B keep the record. Class A is asked the first question, and all who think they can answer hold up their hands. The teacher of Class A decides who shall answer. The teacher who is judge then writes a credit or a debit mark for Class A. If the answer is wrong, the question is then given to Class B. The second question is given first to Class B, the third to Class A, and so on. Questions should all be such as can be answered in a word or two. Space does not permit a full list of questions here, but teachers can easily prepare in advance a sufficiently long list.

1. Who was "the self-sacrificing statesman, who could not be side-tracked or deceived"?
2. Who prophesied the coming of the Kingdom of God?
3. What was Nehemiah's position at court?
4. Who was the leader in the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem?
5. What did Ezra read aloud to a great gathering of people?
6. Who gave the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem?
7. How long had the Jews been in captivity?

SUBJECTS FOR WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

For Younger Pupils.

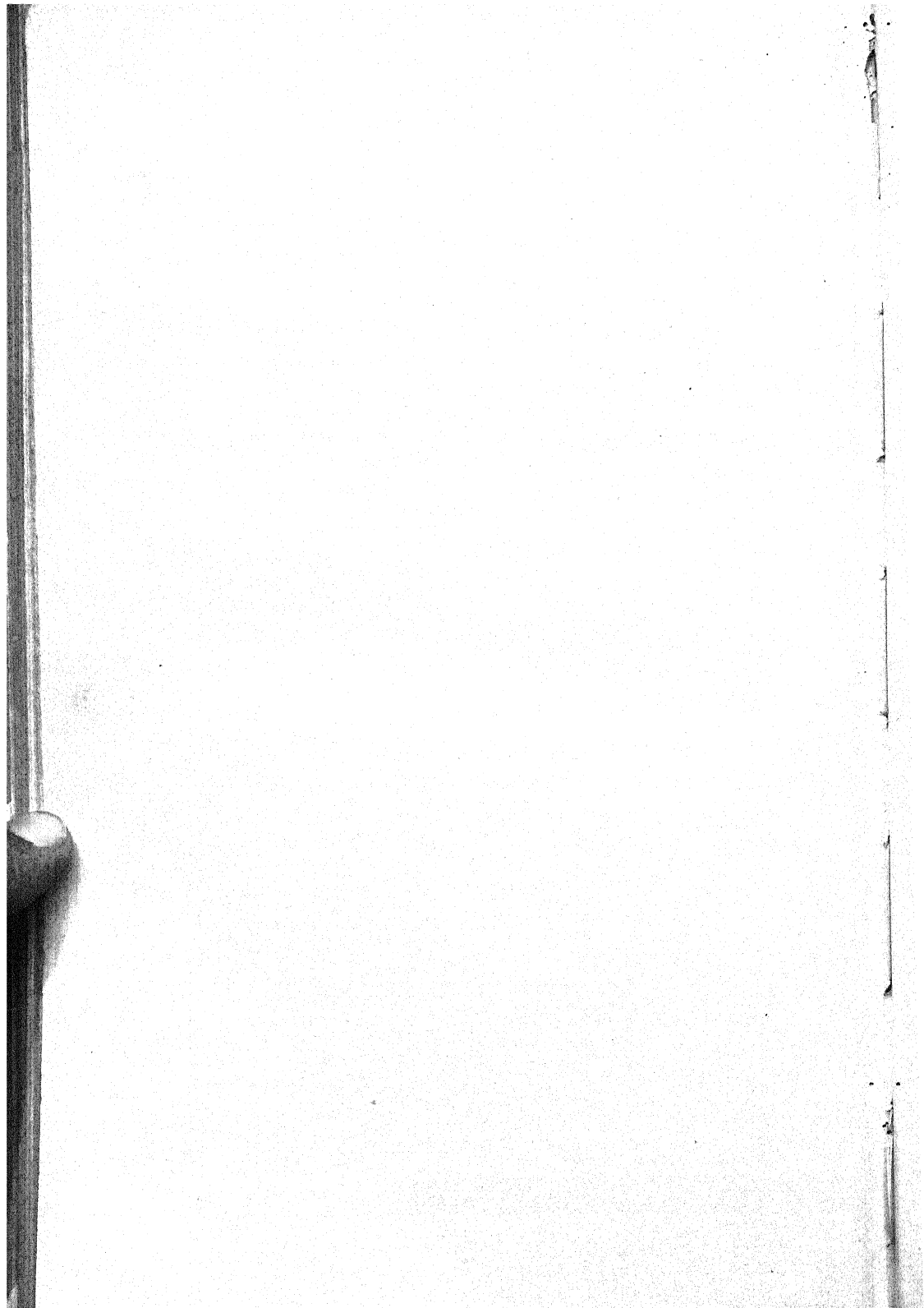
A Cup Bearer before a King.
Building the Walls of Jerusalem.
A Great Public Reading.
How to Keep the Sabbath.

For Older Pupils. A dialogue between two Jews of Babylon in which they discuss the proclamation of Cyrus, the counsels of the prophet, and the arguments in favor of returning to Jerusalem and of staying in the land of their exile.

A character sketch of Nehemiah.
Ezra's Bible Study Campaign.
Tithes.
The Book of Ezra.
The Book of Nehemiah.
The Book of Psalms.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE YEAR'S WORK

1. Mention the terms applied to Jesus in the book of John.
2. Repeat Jn. 3.16.
3. Give the conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria.
4. Give Jesus' words about himself as the Bread of Life.
5. Give a conversation of Jesus with Martha.
6. Tell what Jesus said about himself as the Good Shepherd.
7. What did Jesus say about Mary's deed of love and gratitude?
8. How did Jesus teach a lesson of humility?
9. What did Jesus teach by his allegory of the Vine and its Branches?
10. What was the purpose of John's Gospel as John himself says?
11. Mention a famous prophet of Judah and tell how God called him for his work.
12. Name the three men who had a part in the return to Jerusalem from Babylon and tell what each did.
13. Name a great king of Judah and tell what he did.
14. Tell the story of the finding of the Book of the Law.
15. How did the Southern Kingdom end? Why?
16. What was Cyrus' proclamation and what led him to make it?
17. Name two leaders after the return of the Jews from captivity and tell what each one did.
18. How were the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt?
19. How did Nehemiah enforce the law of the Sabbath?
20. Repeat one of the Psalms.



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